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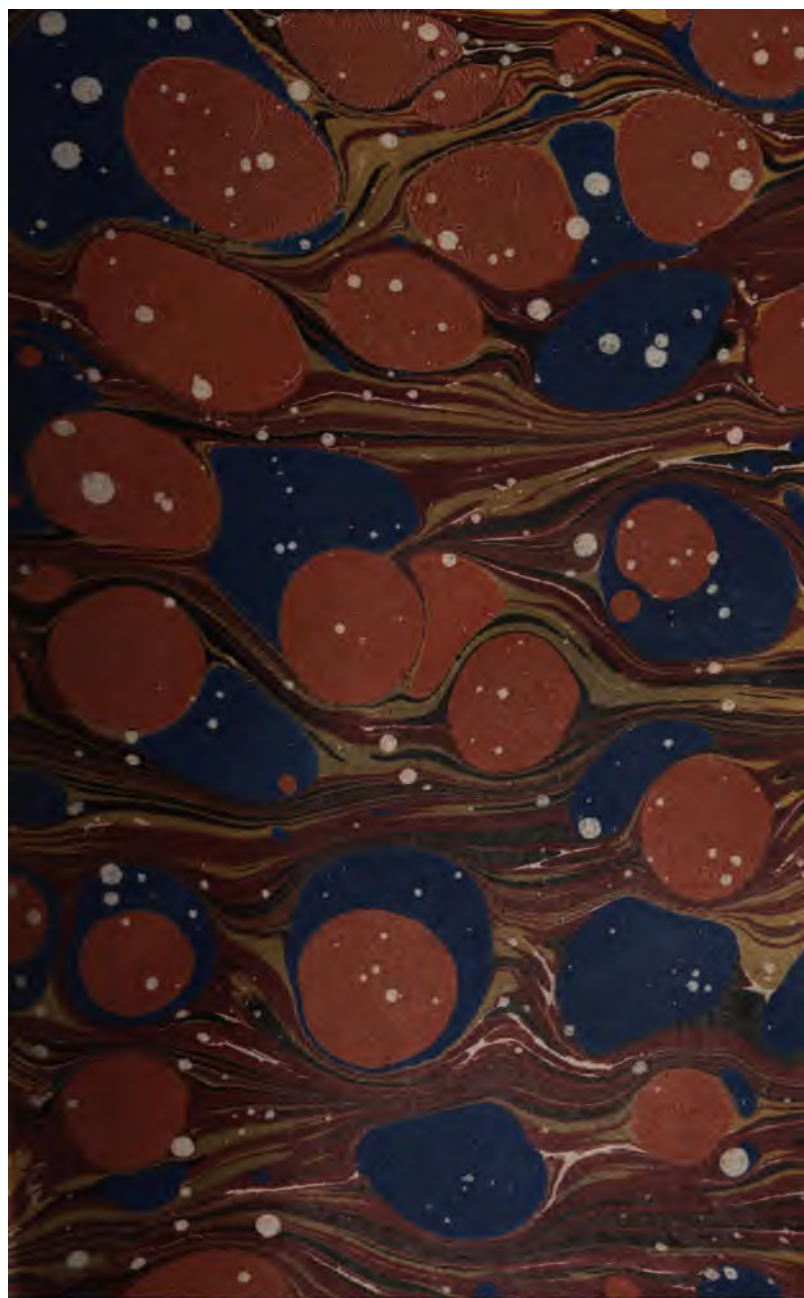
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## INTRODUCTION.

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THERE are few persons who, after a stirring and active life of upwards of a quarter of a century, no matter to what profession they may belong, as the course of life advances, do not frequently glance back upon many events connected with their past career, with a mixture of feelings it would be difficult to describe. This observation the more particularly applies to persons belonging to the "United Service;" and were many of the reminiscences and occurrences in life of those of its members who have passed through a period of service even comparatively of the tamest and most commonplace character revealed, it is beyond all question that some history or event possessed of more than ordinary interest would be found engendered in its relation.



In the following pages my object is to give an outline of incidents that have occurred, either under my own observation, or of narratives that have been imparted to me by brother officers and others, my companions in many wild and stirring adventures; the whole forming a *mélange* of sketches of travel, history, descriptive scenes, and anecdote, the mere etchings of a wanderer, relative to the various climes and countries in which the course of military service, employment of a special nature or other circumstances, may have led him.

As the early period of my life was passed in India, during which time opportunities presented themselves of traversing nearly the whole of that vast empire, I have commenced my narrative with a few passages regarding that country. The tragic event that forms the subject of the first chapter occurred two or three years previous to my landing on its shores; but a century must elapse before the sickening horror it occasioned will have wholly passed away from the minds of the people in the provinces where it took place, who revert to the subject but to curse with all the intensity of Oriental hatred those who were parties to the deed,

in which they do not scruple to include the British Government, from the protection, or at least indulgence, they extended to the perpetrators.

In a prefatory note to the extraordinary and eventful narrative, given under the name of Harcourt, I have mentioned that I am indebted for the details it contains, to a brother officer with whom I was formerly associated on a particular service. A period of twelve years has elapsed since he imparted to me the incidents it embodies, but in the early part of 1850, I saw in an English newspaper, an extract from a French Official Journal, published by order of the Judicial Tribunal in one of the Northern Departments (in all probability for the purpose of affording general information upon the subject, to enable any other claimants that might be in existence to come forward), stating, that demands had been made, and inquiries instituted by distant relatives, (or foreigners who declared themselves to be such,) regarding several large sums of money, and other funds, derived from the property of an officer, who had served in the armies of France with considerable distinction up to the period of the

Consulate, when, owing to a domestic calamity of a frightful and most painful nature, which entailed the necessity of his being confined in a *Maison de Santé*, from which he subsequently succeeded in escaping, the amount in question, no one coming forward to establish any right to its succession, had been appropriated by the Government.

An additional note gave a slight biographical memoir, containing an outline of the singular vicissitudes which had attended the varied existence of the officer alluded to. It sketched briefly his career under Napoleon,—glanced but slightly at the interval which elapsed between his leaving the French service, and proceeding to India, as a period of which very little with any degree of certainty was known, and terminated with a detail of several eventful circumstances, which distinguished the short time he remained in that country; his storming the hill fortress, and release of the captives it contained,—the sudden, and bitter, and persevering enmity of the Mahratta ruler towards him,—his concealment in the very *Zenana* of the Rajah, and subsequent marriage

with the high-born Rajahpootné Princess, who at the risk of her own life, had preserved his,—her early death, and his eventual disappearance, from which date, though it was known he had survived for several years afterwards, no authentic information was ever obtained as to what was his actual fate.

In perusing the narrative I have submitted to him, the reader will in all probability arrive at a similar conclusion to myself, namely, that the facts and circumstances alluded to are the same as those on which, it is founded, and relate to the singular fortunes of the individual whose history it is intended to pourtray.

In submitting this little volume to the Public, I trust I may be pardoned for intimating in conclusion, that if the narration of the facts and incidents it contains is found to merit a sufficient degree of interest and attention, a further series will be hereafter added to those at present given.

G. P. C.

GORITZ, ILLYRIA,

10th July, 1853.

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# Romance of Military Life.

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KISHEN KOWER;

OR, THE MAID OF ODEYPOOR.

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NEVER were the fatal effects of feudal warfare so dreadfully felt by a wretched peasantry as at the period of 18—. The once flourishing country of Rajapootana was almost a desert; the contest was still undecided, and appeared to have the effect of ruining both parties, without determining the superiority of either. The powerful states of Joudpoor and Jeypoor had for centuries been engaged in a constant state of hostility, which, though checked and restrained by the power and vigour of the Mogul emperors, often showed itself in acts of the greatest violence, and most sanguinary conflicts.

On the present occasion, the war was carried on with an animosity and bitterness of hatred, that the distracted state of the country unfortunately

gave them but too many opportunities of exercising: depredations and inroads were made by one party into the country of the other; towns and villages burnt and plundered, and the people slaughtered, quarter on either side never being asked for or obtained! The cause of the present contest between the two Rajahs was the hand of Kishen Kower, the daughter of the Rana of Odeypoor, a princess described by every Hindoo minstrel and historian as a being of such perfect loveliness, that in comparison the beauty of the celebrated Jayadevi\* was as a mountain rivulet to the holy Gunga!† In point of courage, activity, and military knowledge, perhaps Maun Sing, the Rajah of Joudpoor, possessed the advantage over his rival; this, however, was more than counter-balanced by Jugguth Sing, the Prince of Jeypoor, having engaged the notorious Ameer Khan, at the head of a numerous and desperate body of Patans, to espouse his quarrel.

A series of bloody but indecisive battles, with the ruined and desolate appearance which both

\* Jayadevi, the daughter of Jy Sing, Rajah of Kanooj, the subject of many a minstrel's tale and lay, was eagerly sought for in marriage by the Princes of Hindostan. Prithee Lal, the young and gallant Rajah of Delhi, to whom she was passionately attached, decided the contest by carrying her off!

† Ganges.

countries now exhibited, rendered it advisable, however unwilling both parties may have been to such a termination, that peace should be concluded on any terms, in preference to the utter depopulation of the whole country, and rendering it a complete desert, which, if the struggle lasted but even a short time longer, would inevitably be its fate! Ameer Khan also, finding no further plunder was to be obtained, and extremely solicitous regarding the arrears of pay due to his troops, which unless quiet was restored he was well aware never could be paid, was urgent for peace: but now that the contest had reached its present height, how was it to be effected?

It was on a cold, bright, moonlight evening in December, in the year above mentioned, that a solitary horseman arrived at a small choultry,\* three miles distant from the village of Koora. Not a single tree was visible, and rich and fertile as the soil undoubtedly was, it lay uncultivated, while the bones of men and horses scattered around, intermixed occasionally with the fragments of spear, and sabre, and broken matchlocks, afforded melancholy proofs of its having been the field of one of the late desperate conflicts between the two belligerents.

\* Place of reception for travellers.

The horseman had no sooner arrived, than dismounting, and tying his horse to one of the pillars of the building, he cast a scrutinising and somewhat anxious glance into the interior, as if in search of some object or person it contained, and then, as if disappointed, commenced slowly pacing up and down in front of his charger. At times he stopped and appeared buried in profound thought; the moon, which shone with the brilliancy of an eastern hemisphere, disclosing in the person of the stranger, a tall, and apparently stout, and powerfully set man; his chudder, though folded round his turban, did not conceal his countenance, which was dark, but extremely handsome. A something, however, would have appeared to a keen observer that did not please,—a covert sneer, and a perhaps somewhat sinister expression seemed to lurk beneath it: in fact, in no way can I find words to describe it so well as the expression of an Irish officer, who saw him a short time after the incident about to be related took place, and who declared “he never saw so handsome a fellow with such an *ugly look!*”

In a short time the neighing of his charger announced the approach of another horseman, who was seen advancing at full speed towards the spot. Hastily examining his pistols, the stranger drew

them from the holsters, and having placed them in his sash, awaited the new arrival. A few minutes brought him to the choultry, when,—

“Ameer Khan!” “Adjeit Sing!” pronounced by each in a low, cautious whisper, proclaimed the mutual recognition. The new-comer was a stout, strongly-built man, inclined to corpulency, the expression of whose countenance was heavy and unintelligent, and on the whole the very reverse of what would have been looked for in a person to whose name is attached the stigma of so many deeds of perfidy and cruelty. The complexion was extremely fair, and the deep black eye round and full, but of the same unmeaning character as the rest of his features. Such is the outline of the celebrated predatory leader, Ameer Khan, whose apologists assert that the crimes imputed to him were committed by his troops, which he at all times possessed inclination, but wanted the power to restrain.

“Adjeit Sing,” said the latter, “by the soul of the Prophet, well met. I have attended your summons, and——”

“Before we proceed further,” said the Rajapoot, abruptly interrupting his companion, “do me the favour to follow me a few steps; conferences of this nature,” he added as he proceeded eighty or



a hundred yards from the building, to a spot where it was utterly impossible they could be overheard, "should never be held where there is any chance, however remote, of a third party being present. And now, Ameer Khan," he concluded, as he stopped short, and looked stedfastly in the face of his confederate, "what I have to communicate is of a nature that three words will suffice to explain—ALL IS LOST!"

"How,—when?" said the Mussulman aghast.

"Simply this—the Rana is inflexible; the Rajah of Kooradoor, Sugeram Sing, by what means I know not, has obtained information of what our intentions are; his own bands are already in the saddle, and he is urging him at once to decide in favour of one of the rival princes, who, aided by the troops of Odeypoor, will soon terminate the contest; so that unless some measures are taken, and those of a decided nature, my head falls, and you will be driven back to your barren plains of Affghanistan, if indeed the British Government do not prevent the necessity of such a movement."

"And this," said Ameer Khan, "is the result of your boasted influence over the Rana?"

"I perhaps was wrong," said Adjeit Sing, coolly, "in supposing he actually had one feeling,

possessed even by the wild beasts of the forest,—a regard for his own offspring. But instead of idling away time in useless recrimination, let us devise some expedient to extricate ourselves from our present predicament.”

“By the beard of the Prophet,” said Ameer Khan, “nothing can I think of: my followers are already in a state of open mutiny, and if the money is not very shortly forthcoming, in their present humour they might perchance mistake the country of Odeypoor for their own, and exercise their rights accordingly.”

“And much that would avail them, opposed in their present rabble state, with their half-starved horses, to men led by such a soldier as Sugeram Sing,—not to mention the probability, even supposing he were worsted, of his calling upon the British officer commanding the troops encamped at M——, who, I have good reason to know, has received the orders of his Government to march at his requisition.” He paused for a moment, and scanned the countenance of his companion with intense eagerness, when, perceiving his words had produced the desired effect, he continued, “Come, my friend, we understand each other,—the districts you have promised,—my office of Dewan,\* and

\* Chief Minister.

even life itself is forfeited, should our plans be discovered before they are ripe for execution."

"But how, in the name of Eblis, has this sudden turn occurred?"

"Listen, and you shall hear. We both thought we had a weak, imbecile old man to contend with, to whom we need only make a proposition, no matter of what nature, to have it acceded to. When, after reverting to the probability of the utter extinction of the Rajapoot name and honour, if the present contest continued, I hinted at the death of his daughter as the only way of terminating it,—I wish you had seen him,—by Ishwar! it seemed as if the slumbering spirit of fourscore years had been aroused, and started up in that one single moment. 'Adjeit Sing,' said the old man, 'is it thus thou treatest thine over-indulgent sovereign, and proposest to him the death of the child of his bosom? he who hath made thee what thou art, and hath so often shielded thee from thy deserved portion—death? Out from my sight, thou man of blood! I am old and feeble—but mark me, the avenger is not far distant!' The spirit of death itself, indeed, appeared to speak from the mouth of the old man. I retired from his presence, and a short time afterwards was informed of a despatch having

been sent off to Sugeram Sing of Kooradoor, to raise his followers, and come at their head to the Durbar\* to-morrow,—for *what* purpose I am too well assured: it was to tell thee this my signet reached you. And now for our plans to counteract the doom that is about to descend on our heads.”

Ameer Khan looked blank with dismay, as he replied falteringly, “What can be done at this short warning, far surpasses my ability to conceive.”

“A truly wise and sagacious leader is he,” said the Rajapoot chieftain with a sneer, “who, because his spear misses at the first cast, gives up the attempt!—But answer me; know you not of another Rajapoot female in the Anderoon† of the Rana?”

“None that I am aware of, unless it is the old Chand Bhye,‡ in whom Alla in his wisdom has vested the soul of Eblis, as some amends for the female spirit with which he has imbued her brother; but *she*, methinks, is not likely at three-score years of age to be accepted as a substitute for the young Peri?”

“It is to her that I allude, and she may be of more service to us in this matter than you are aware of. You are right in the conclusion you have drawn regarding her; whatever her brother the

\* Court or Council.

† Haram, or female apartments.

‡ Princess.

Rana lacks of the old Rajapoot spirit is more than compensated by what she possesses; haughty, high-minded, with a blind devotion to all the customs and manners of her race, to *her* we must trust for the accomplishment of our plans: the princess, too, herself, is not deficient in a high, visionary sense of honour; and this feeling, worked upon by her aunt, will in all probability prove successful." He took a few turns, and then again stopped short, and addressing his companion, said in a low, suppressed voice, "To-morrow our destinies will be decided; long before the time for the assembly of the Durbar I will see her."

"But what," said Ameer Khan hesitatingly, "*if she will not drink the potion?*"

"Then," returned the Rajapoot fiercely, "my dagger must speed the business—ONE of us must perish!"

With a cold thrill of mingled joy and horror, the Mussulman saw the traitor depart, and shortly after, mounting his horse, returned to his own camp.

The sun rose with his usual splendour, and as its rays pierced the apartments of the Zenana appropriated to the young princess, it beheld her descend to the gardens of the palace to which they



adjoined. It was impossible to conceive a creature more beautiful, or one who walked in such unparalleled loveliness,—the half opened, rich, full coral lip disclosed two rows of teeth, that rivalled in whiteness the ivory of the desert, or the pearls of Bassein; while her full, large, dark eye excelled in tenderness and expression the antelope of Yemen;\* her hair falling in clusters of jetty and luxuriant tresses down her neck and shoulders, completed the picture of the Eastern beauty. She was deadly pale, and though somewhat calmed by the cold of the morning air, still exhibited the agitation of a person suffering from overwrought excitement.

This had been caused by a fearful dream the night before, in which the goddess Mahadevi had appeared to her, and in a dark and threatening manner had announced an appalling and dreadful doom as hovering over the whole family, unless some propitiatory blood-offering was tendered on her altars. As she wandered mid the shrubs and flowers her thoughts reverted to the contest between the two Rajahs for her hand, and the disastrous consequences which had followed, some of the particulars of which had reached her,—could *she* be the sacrifice required by the Divinity for its termination? She thought of her kind and affectionate

\* Arabia Felix.

father, of his brave and gallant nobles, and of his loyal and chivalrous people, who would spurn the execrable superstition. Reassured by these reflections, after a short ramble she returned to the palace.

Seated in her luxuriant bower, adorned by her doting parent with all the art and ornament of Frangestan, while singing some of the wild songs of her native hills, accompanying the melody of her voice with the soft sweet notes of the kanioon,\* the princess was roused by an approaching foot-step,—she listened, a suppressed whisper was heard, and the opening door gave entrance to her aunt, the Chand Byhe, followed by the Dewan, Adjeit Sing! A feeling of dread, so often undefinable to the many who experience it, shot across the unfortunate girl as she beheld these ministers of evil.

Stern resolution, fixed and immovable, was pictured in the eye of the elder princess, whose stately, upright figure, unbent by age, and firm step, (the which, had it not been for her hair of almost silvery whiteness, would have led the spectator to have supposed her at least thirty years younger,) formed a singular contrast to the haggard look and tottering step of her powerful and muscular companion!

\* A kind of guitar.

As Kishen Kower gazed from one to the other, and with a look of soul-moving entreaty towards the chieftain to supplicate for his protection, which not even the tiger of the forest could have disregarded, her aunt advanced towards her, and removing a cloth from a small covered tray which the Dewan carried, disclosed a bowl and dagger!

"Daughter of the Sun," said the Bhye in a firm but hollow tone, "at whose birth Adversity presided, 'tis thine to save from extinction the race of thy divine ancestry; better that one life, though so beloved, should be sacrificed, than that Brahma's chosen race upon earth should be exterminated!" Adjeit Sing fixed his eyes upon his victim with the deadly gaze of the rattle-snake, as he waited her reply.—"Dost thou hesitate, girl?" continued the Bhye, fiercely, "Choose, degenerate minion! and that quickly."

"For mercy, mercy!" shrieked the unhappy victim, "grant me but one short hour's respite, and let me see my father."

"Thy father,—" returned her aunt, "the degenerate Rajapoot, the imbecile sovereign, the pitiful representative of a long line of divine warriors,—call not upon him,—thy hour is come!"

"Yet hear me, cruel as thou art,—let me but take leave of my father—my kind, indulgent father—

and then if my life can in any way benefit my race, let it be given up." The Bhye paused irresolutely, and looked towards the minister.

"Never," he exclaimed with ferocity, "never! what must be done, must be done speedily."

"Adjeit Sing, my father's favourite, and my unprovoked enemy, you whom your sovereign has loaded with honours, and exalted above his nobles, what require *you* at my hands?"

"Your life," he said, with the same gloomy fierceness, at the same time grasping the hilt of his dagger, his fiend-like purpose utterly unmoved by this pathetic appeal of his unfortunate victim.

"My child," said the Bhye with more gentleness, but in the same firm tone she had hitherto used, "the cause, however innocent, of this bloody war, your evil destiny prevails, and you **MUST** die—there is no alternative:—but remember the glories of our race, and let not the vile passion Fear—the coward's portion—disturb the few remaining minutes you have left."

"And is there no hope, no help near, Adjeit Sing?" said the unhappy young girl, turning to the minister: "art thou a father? hast thou any children that look up to thee?—think, then, upon what *you* would suffer were they to be torn from you." She raised her streaming eyes to heaven as

she concluded this appeal, which touched even his obdurate heart. "Will you," she continued imploringly, "consign to destruction one who never injured you, the daughter of your sovereign? *he* will require my blood at your hands, and though old and feeble, still prove capable of avenging me. Even should he fail," she continued with more energy—for a portion of the spirit of the haughty race from which she drew her birth animated even her gentle nature—"some nobles of the Rajapoot race will still be found who will not let this stigma rest upon the name of the children of the Sun unrequited."

A distant trampling of horse struck upon the ear. "He is come!—now, or I am lost," exclaimed the Dewan, as, rushing towards the unfortunate princess, he brandished the dagger aloft. She eluded his grasp, and shrieked for help, but Adjeit Sing had previously removed all the guards to a distance;—he seized her,—the weapon was descending, when by a desperate effort she extricated herself from his hold!

"Stop!" she exclaimed, despair at length assuming its sway, while the flush of maddened fever overspread her hitherto pallid countenance:—"since my fate is sealed, and I must die, let it be in a manner worthy of my race:—give me the cup."

•

Her aunt advanced, and placed it in her hand,—it shook not; whatever fear may have previously possessed her, it now appeared to have subsided; she fixed her eyes upon them, the flush had disappeared, and given way to more than her former paleness! “This, then, is the marriage to which I was foredoomed, and this will be my bridal bed. To *you*,” addressing her aunt, “who are the cause of my death from a mistaken sense of honour, I pray that the great Brahma in his mercy may extend his forgiveness.—To *you*,” looking towards Adjeit Sing, “who cut short the life of an innocent person who never injured you, the daughter of the man to whom you owe everything in life; to you I leave the pangs of your own feelings as your greatest punishment, and the fittest retribution.—Now, farewell to life—farewell, oh! my father.”—She raised the cup to her lips, and draining it to the very bottom, almost immediately fell senseless on the rich Persian carpet!

The actors in this execrable business gazed first on their hapless victim, and then on each other as they hastily quitted the apartment, with mixed, and very different feelings: on the harsh and inflexible features of the Bhye a degree of emotion and sorrow might be traced, rarely, perhaps never before, perceptible in that stern and forbidding

countenance; while a feeling of joy, mingled too late with the bitterest feelings of remorse, found its way to the heart of the cruel, ambitious minister.

There was a slight convulsive shudder, a faint groan, and with a smile that irradiated her innocent, angelic countenance, the pure spirit of the unhappy victim escaped its earthly tenement,—and she lay a corpse! The slave who first entered the apartment, said, that during her life-time her young and beautiful mistress had never appeared so lovely, which made her at first inclined to disbelieve the report of her death, and imagine she was in a profound sleep, though three or four hours afterwards the body changed colour, and was covered with red and black spots, which left no doubt as to the mode of her death.

A dead silence prevailed throughout the wide and populous city: men gazed mournfully at each other, but spoke not a word; the shops were shut, the bazaars and public places deserted,—it seemed as if some great national calamity had occurred! Begirt by his chieftains and nobles, the Rana sat in the chamber where the Durbar held its meetings, and here the same death-like silence prevailed. The countenance of the Prince exhibited the appearance of the most perfect idiocy, the dreadful

intelligence having proved too much for his reason to sustain ; while in the features of those around, a struggle of conflicting passions might be traced,—fear, distrust, and indignation mingling in the breasts of some of the most daring, with the fierce burning of revenge.

Adjeit Sing sat on the right of the Rana, his countenance fixed on the ground, wearing an assumed expression of humility and sorrow, though the glance of exultation which at intervals flashed from his eye expressed how ill the dissimulation was sustained.

A heavy tread, as of some one approaching, was the prelude to the entrance of a noble, martial-looking figure, on whose gallant bearing it was impossible to gaze without awe and admiration. His age might be about fifty; his fierce, dilating eye, firm and haughty step, as he strode into the hall, his erect, martial, and muscular built form, showed him as a person of no common description ; his dress was perfectly plain, without any ornament, but the pistols and dagger in his belt, with his shield and sabre, were of the most splendid and costly eastern manufacture, richly mounted in gold, and inlaid with precious stones. He cast a stern glance around, and then walking towards the throne without any of the obeisances required by



oriental etiquette, demanded, "Sovereign of Odeypoor, head of the divine race, is it true, what thy people relate,—and has the pride and flower of the Rajapoot tribes been sacrificed on the altar of assassination?"

The Rana answered not, but turned on him a vacant stare, as if unable to comprehend what was addressed to him; but the Dewan rising, whilst his eyes glanced with malicious triumph, exclaimed, "Who is it in the house of mourning that intrudes with ill-timed clamour upon the grief of a parent and his children?"

"Adjeit Sing," said the warrior with contemptuous impatience, "it is I,—I, Sugeram Sing, of Kooradoor, that put the question,—I demand to know if the Princess Kishen Kower, of Odeypoor, is alive?"

"*She is not*," said Adjeit Sing in reply, his voice sinking almost to a whisper, while an universal shudder of horror pervaded the whole room; "the princess," he added, in a louder tone, "ever mindful of the glory and honour of the Rajapoot race, to prevent its utter extermination, hath undertaken a voluntary death, with the sanction and approbation of her father and sovereign."

"And this is true?" said Sugeram Sing, appealing to the assembly.

"It is—it is," he was answered throughout.

For one moment only he seemed paralysed with horror; in the next, unbuckling his arms, he advanced, and laying them at the foot of the throne, and addressing the Rana, pronounced with stern dignity:—"I was not fifteen years of age when I first assumed those arms; within a year of that period the Affghan leader Affsool Khan fell by my hand; they were then, as they have ever since been, devoted to your service; they were the grateful tribute of his sovereign to my ancestor, who singled out and slew the ablest general of the great Acbar at Chittore,\* in the presence of both armies; by him were they vowed to the service of his prince and country, and faithfully have his descendants performed that vow. 'Tis past now, and I resign them into the hands of those from whence they were given; my career is ended, and I bid adieu for ever to bright arms and glory:—But why upbraid *thee*, poor, desolate, heart-stricken old man, the mere tool of a villain of the blackest die!" His eyes glared with fury. "Murderer!" he shouted, as with the sure and deadly spring of the tiger he rushed upon the terror-struck Adjeit Sing, and dragged

\* For an account of this celebrated Siege, see Dow's History of Hindostan.

him to the ground, while one universal execration against the homicide echoed through the spacious hall. "I will not kill thee," he continued, as he gazed upon the pallid features of the Dewan; "no, the honour of the family of Kooradoor would be stained by having the blood of such a miscreant on its hands; yet hear me"—he released the grasp on his throat, and spurned him with his foot—"hear me," he continued, "you who have wrought this stigma on the Rajapoot name and honour,—and credit my words, for they are as true as if they issued from the mouth of Brahma himself—May your life, sleeping or waking, be ever one perpetual source of misery, both to yourself and all connected with you; may your heart be lacerated by the keenest pangs remorse can inflict; from henceforth your marriage-bed shall be barren, and your present offspring live but to curse their execrable parent, and die!"

He ceased—a confused murmur ran through the assembly, but he heeded it not, and turning upon his heel strode out of the room; the trampling of the horses of his followers shortly after announcing his departure.

The Rana did not long survive the loss of his daughter, the affairs of his kingdom, from the

period of her death, being left entirely to his ministers and nobles.

The contest between the two Rajahs of Jeypoor and Joudpoor, thus checked by the death of the princess, was effectually concluded by the powerful intervention of the British Government.

Ameer Khan was disappointed in the expectations he had formed upon the death of the princess, by the advance of a British force. He subsequently entered into a treaty, by which he engaged to disband the hordes of predatory horse, of which he was the leader, provided several valuable and extensive districts, which he then held, were secured to him and his descendants in perpetuity. Unaccountable as it may seem, this was acceded to; and this man, the most contemptible foe the British Government ever encountered in India, stained with every crime that debases human nature, enjoyed for years the fruits of his villanies, and resided at Tonk Ameerapoor, which he made his capital, and where he subsequently died at an advanced age.

Sugaram Sing, Raja of Kooradoor, lived to the period of nearly thirty years after the event we have related, but never could be prevailed upon to resume his arms, or take any part in the

disturbances of the country. Faithful to his vow, he resided at his hill-fort of Kooradoor, from which he never stirred to mingle in public life, denying himself even the pleasures of the sports of the field.

Adjeit Sing survived but to experience the truth of the curse pronounced against him. Driven from his office of Dewan, and obliged to live in retirement from the horror his presence everywhere excited, he dragged on a wretched existence. His family all died young, with the exception of one son, in whom all his hopes were centered: he, however, regarded his father with abhorrence, and shortly afterwards died suddenly, without any apparent illness. This event, which the superstitious people regarded as the fulfilment of the award denounced against him for his crimes, proved the death-warrant of the murderer himself, who, haggard and attenuated by long sickness, and gnawed by the acutest pangs of remorse, shortly afterwards expired in the greatest agonies of mind and body, the subject of universal execration!

## THE OUTLAW.

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THE evening was setting in with a light cool breeze, towards the end of October 1815, upon one of those numerous arid plains, between the Jumna and the Sutlege. As usual in the interval between the termination of the monsoon, or rainy season, and the setting in of the cold weather, the day had been intensely hot, and partaking of that oppressive sultriness, which is the more severely felt by the European resident in India, than even during the period when the fiery land-winds prevail. A gentle breeze, however, at this moment was wafted across the wide expanse of land, which forms the subject of the opening of our narrative, imparting to the air a delicious and refreshing coolness. Far as the eye could reach, with one exception only, not a living object, not a tree was visible; while not a sound broke upon the stillness that prevailed; and as far as regarded any subject for the attraction of passing remark or interest, a person might as well have been on the broad

bosom of the ocean itself, so complete was the solitude that reigned around. On all sides the horizon was clear and uninterrupted, except in the one spot already alluded to, which, close on its extreme verge in the north-west quarter, appeared in the distance to be a belt of low thick jungle. It was in the opposite direction to this that the solitude was eventually broken by the appearance of several figures on the scene.

First three or four were indistinctly visible ; these were succeeded by others ; and then followed by what possessed the appearance of a dark, compact mass. And now the sunbeams flashed upon bright arms and accoutrements, the scarlet uniforms became visible, and the whole party were distinctly manifest as that of a subaltern's guard, forming a treasure escort. From the strength of the detachment, the amount was apparently in gold, contained in two light tumbrils only, each drawn by six fine strong bullocks. The soldiers were ranged so as to envelop both in their march, with the exception of a few forming the usual flanking parties, with their advanced and rear guards. These, however, in consequence of the wholly open nature of the ground they were traversing, had gradually fallen back so as to be within hearing of the song, or narrative, with which some of the party in turn

beguiled the tedium of the march, as they moved merrily onward.

The road lay direct through the belt of jungle we have previously alluded to, the foliage of which seemed to loom in the distance much higher and thicker as they approached it. The rays of the setting sun were shining brightly on the summits of the trees, as the detachment came within rather more than a quarter of a mile of the entrance, when the main body suddenly came to a halt, and a momentary silence ensued.—What has occurred? Nothing—the flanking parties and advanced guard still kept moving onward, and a casual spectator might have been led to suppose it was merely for the purpose of creating a wider range of distance between themselves and their comrades; the military eye, however, would at once have seen that they were a well-trained band, and though there may have been but little probability of danger being near, the ground in front of them was admirably adapted for concealing it, and therefore it behoved them to be warily on the alert, to unmask, or give due warning of its approach. As they moved onward, therefore, with no perceptible difference in their apparently careless, yet steady bearing, the occasional clank of a ramrod was heard springing the musket, to

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ascertain that the charge was well-rammed home, while the lock was keenly scrutinised, to see if the flint was in order and the pan well filled.

Within a few minutes the word "Forward!" again was issued, and the young subaltern commanding the party pushed forward his mettlesome Arab to a hand-gallop. He is young in years, eighteen summers have apparently scarcely yet passed over him; but he has the sharp, quick eye of energy and daring, and the bronze colour of his cheek, but little according with the blue eye, and long, light, waving hair of his British fatherland, would seem to intimate that scenes of danger and warfare to him, young as he is, are anything but new. Reining up his steed, and unslinging his glass, he swept the scene before him, gazing with intense earnestness, as if he would pierce through the dense mass of foliage that darkened in front. Apparently satisfied with his scrutiny, he returned to his men.

They were now within two hundred yards of the jungle; the sun had disappeared behind the trees, though occasionally its rays would burst forth with a dazzling brightness in the interstices of the dark mass before them. One of these, with a momentary brilliancy, almost resembling a flash of lightning, apparently so peculiarly attracted the

young Commander's notice, that he was on the point of drawing the attention of his white-bearded soubahdar, who rode a few paces behind him, towards it, when on turning for that purpose, he observed the veteran was also gazing upon the spot from which it issued, with an earnestness expressive of the strongest degree of suspicion; while almost at the same instant, the havildar commanding the advance raised his fusee high in air to a perpendicular position, as a signal of alarm, a movement that was quickly followed by some fifteen or twenty vivid flashes, which successively parting in apparently quick, but deliberate aim, terminated in a volley of matchlocks, the leaden shower from which came crashing and tearing among the main body of the detachment. Close, and well-directed as the fire had been, it was not so deadly in its effects as might have been anticipated, though the reason of this was very speedily explained in every one of the carriage bullocks being at once struck to the ground, the evident intention of the hidden assailant being, to arrest the progress of the treasure and prevent its escaping in the *melee*.

"Close up, my lads," shouted the young lieutenant; "bugles, recal skirmishers."

The shrill blast of the instrument had scarcely

given forth the order, and the men from front and rear had barely hurried up in breathless haste to re-join their ranks, when the jungle seemed to be alive with armed men, and the levelled lance blades and gleaming sabres of at least three hundred horsemen flashed out, as issuing forth with loud shouts, they rode full speed towards the devoted little band, scarcely numbering five and forty bayonets. Silent and steady they stood, their eye glancing alternately from their advancing enemy to their leader, who had only time to whisper the old soubahdar, "Our chance is indeed desperate, but our only plan is to keep them from closing, for, if I mistake not, these men are something more than ordinary Decoits."\*

The assailants had ranged up to within eighty yards of their adversaries, when the word "Fire!" rung out from the British detachment, the prelude to a sheet of flame, the force of which told with fearful effect upon the former. Upwards of twenty saddles were vacant; some of the party came to a dead halt, while the speed of the rest was materially diminished. But a tall, commanding figure sprang with the rapidity of lightning from his dead charger, which had fallen pierced to the heart by a musket shot, and vaulting upon another that had

\* Robbers.

lost its rider, he waved his men onwards. There was a tremendous rush, a fearful crash, another volley, and then the sabre and bayonet came into active and deadly play.

The Seapoys fought with all the vigour of desperation, animated by the example of their young leader, who was evidently beloved by his men, as more than one was cut down in endeavouring to save him, instead of attending to his own immediate adversary; but the odds were too great to hope for either safety or retreat, and the fall of their commander, who, after gallantly sabreing with his own hand two of his assailants, was unhorsed and severely wounded by a lance, induced the few remaining men of the detachment left unwounded to listen to the voice of the leader of their assailants, who repeatedly called on them to cease a useless resistance, and save their own lives, at the same time shouting to his own followers to forbear.

A single glance was sufficient to show that a further continuance of the conflict was absolute madness, not fifteen men of the whole detachment remaining standing. The lieutenant was bleeding profusely from a wound in his side, his features in their pallor almost leading to the belief that his young days were numbered; the white locks of the

old soubahdar were stained with blood, as he lay senseless from a severe sabre cut; two of the non-commissioned officers had fallen, and, with the exception of the number above specified, the rest of the detachment lay around the charge they had so well defended; while of their adversaries, though they had suffered severely in their first onset, from the moment the conflict had assumed its more deadly and close character, scarcely a man had fallen, and they now stood forth, at least two hundred and fifty well-equipped and well-mounted men.

Slowly and reluctantly the survivors recovered their arms, the which they were not called upon to surrender, and leaning sullenly upon them observed the actions of their foes, which they no longer possessed the power to oppose. They were prompt and ready, evidently expressive of the whole affair having been as skilfully and deliberately planned, as it was boldly and daringly executed. A single horseman rode from the party back into the jungle, and a few minutes afterwards twelve horses in artillery harness issued from it, six of which were speedily attached to each of the tumbrils. During this period, the chief of the band, and several of his followers, had dismounted, and were occupied in rendering what service they could to the wounded,

the young officer in particular being the object of especial care to the former, who, raising him from the ground, placed him in a half sitting position against a dead horse, and then unfolding his own cummerbund,\* wound it tightly round him, over his wounded side.

On this being accomplished, the assailants, at a signal from their chief, formed up round the tumbrils, and as if careless of, or defying pursuit, set off towards the jungle at a slow and deliberate pace, carrying their killed and wounded with them, he himself turning towards the detachment previous to following them, and calling out in a fine, clear, manly voice, "In three hours you will receive assistance from your own people; remain, therefore, tranquilly by your fallen comrades till it arrives. On the head of the despoiler and oppressor rest the blood that has been shed this day, and not on mine!"

The fame of this daring exploit soon became noised throughout the whole of northern India; the natives everywhere spoke of it as one of many acts embodying a just retribution; Europeans alluded to it with astonishment, and, spite of anger and prejudice (especially among the military) strongly intermingled with admiration, while in

\* A fold of cloth wound round the body similarly to a sash.

speaking of the author of an enterprise executed with so much courage and intelligence, all parties united with one voice in exclaiming, "*Omeer Sing.*"

And *who* was the being whose name had acquired such extraordinary celebrity as a subject for terror and wonder throughout the country, and who treated with scorn and defiance alike the mandates and the strength of that all-absorbing and wonderful power, before which the mightiest princes of Hindostan had been compelled to succumb?

Omeer Sing was the petty Rajah of a tract of territory bordering upon the Province of Rohlicund, inhabited by a fierce and warlike race, devoted to his interests. During the campaigns of Lord Lake against the Mahrattas in 1803, he had served against the British forces, though, as it was asserted, if not with reluctance, at least not with the enterprising spirit which might have been expected from his character, and most assuredly not with the fierce and daring energy that he had recently displayed. It was, indeed, very generally believed, that like many of the Rajapoot chieftains, he was not over friendly to their rulers of Northern India, and if he acquiesced in their sovereignty, it was more from policy, and the inability to maintain a

successful resistance, than any other motive; a supposition that was more than corroborated by the alacrity with which he gave in his adhesion to the British government, on the conclusion of the brilliant and successful campaigns that terminated in the expulsion of the Mahrattas.

How he subsequently first became embroiled with the former power it is difficult to say, though rumour ascribed it to claims on the part of *soi-disant* distant relatives, (of whom till that moment the chieftain had never heard,) upon the extensive Zemindarry which he held, the which was followed up by whispered insinuations of the discovery of secret and treasonable correspondence by the English authorities, with the Mahratta confederacy, even then preparing for a renewal of the desperate struggle by which they sought, at a later period, to regain the supremacy they had lost.

Whatever degree of truth may have been attached to the reasons asserted, one thing was certain, and this was, that the Rajah was suddenly deprived of the whole of his extensive estates, the which were assigned to the various claimants previously mentioned. Of this decree there seemed to be but one opinion (except among the clique of Red Tapists in whom it originated,) in regard to its impolicy and indecent haste, if not positive injustice;



and several among the British authorities, whose information was deemed the surest in regard to its truth and accuracy, remonstrated in the strongest terms against the measure. As usual their representations were unheeded, and when they were succeeded by intimations of the evils which were likely to prove the result, and which very speedily followed, haughty reproof was the sole answer condescended to be given in reply; the which was the more particularly administered to the gentleman who exercised the office of Assistant Political Agent of the district, and was the Commanding Officer of the regiment of irregular horse quartered on that part of the frontier; who, from having been employed there for a series of years, and being very generally supposed to be better informed upon the subject than anybody else, was, as a natural consequence, deemed by the Calcutta officials to be wholly unacquainted with it, glossing over their own ignorant folly, and the mischiefs arising from it, by the declaration, that it appeared to them the intimacy subsisting between the deposed chieftain and Major Treton, the officer in question, had contributed greatly to influence his opinion upon the question.

At first the prosecution against him was met on the part of the Rajah with respectful remonstrance, but this being totally unheeded, resistance quickly

succeeded, at first passive, but speedily followed by opposition of so vigorous a nature, that on the decree for his deposition being issued, the presence of a strong military force, with a battery of artillery, was deemed requisite to enforce it.

Beloved by his retainers and dependents, as the Rajah departed from the fort of his ancestors they quitted their fields and villages. Sabres, lances, and saddles were very quickly brought into vigorous requisition, and the whole territory soon became an absolute desert, for whoever settled themselves upon it were either driven off by bands of horsemen too numerous to be resisted, or their crops were laid waste and destroyed. Detachments of the military were ordered out, among them Treton's brilliant horse; their leader,—stung, perhaps, by the innuendo conveyed in the last communication addressed to him; or no,—actuated by that true spirit which distinguishes the British soldier, which impels him under any circumstances to fulfil his duty, straining every nerve to put down his former friend and his daring followers. All was, however, unsuccessful; matters proceeded from bad to worse,—the chieftain had been outlawed, and a large price set upon his head; but so far from being crushed, his followers seemed every day to increase in numerical strength and courageous resolution; valuable con-

voys were captured, treasure detachments attacked, and at length, on the successful issue of the daring enterprise the relation of which opens our present chapter, becoming known to the Government, the which cost them upwards of ten lacs of rupees, or more than 100,000*l.* sterling, a large *corps d'armée*, in different brigades and regiments, were ordered out against the outlawed Rajah, with orders to capture or destroy himself and followers at every risk.

This, however, had now become a task much easier ordered than carried into effect; the country people had evidently entered into the chieftain's cause, the impression being everywhere prevalent that he had been treated with a harshness and injustice without example. In his various forays, too, the peasantry had never on any occasion experienced the remotest injury from his men (save the intruders upon his own territory), while they had often received the most abundant proof of his liberality and kindness for any service rendered or information imparted to him. Even towards his British adversaries he had displayed a humanity, forbearance, and chivalrous courtesy, that rendered his name a theme for wonder and admiration, and frequently were feelings expressive of sympathy and regret manifested by those serving

against him, conjoined with the sincere hope that something would hereafter occur to terminate the struggle, and restore the gallant exile to his rights; for, as the real facts of the history became more generally known, the injustice which had been rendered him appeared more glaringly manifest.

The rising sun of a clear, sharp, frosty morning in the month of December fell upon an encampment of horsemen, situated near a beautiful tope,\* upon the borders of an extensive tank, large enough almost to have been taken for a lake. Before a tent, pitched conspicuously in rear of the centre, the folds of the broad banner of England waved in the breeze, a signal expressive of the station of the commander of the corps, as well as of the soldiery it embodied belonging to the British service. But of the regiment at least two-thirds were now absent, the head-stalls and heel-ropes of the horses laying upon the ground, in the lines of their respective troops and squadrons, marking the places where they had been picketed. The green alkaliks or tunics, and red caftans and turbands of the men, marked them as belonging to the irregular cavalry.

In the lines themselves a few horses were to be seen, with some six or eight sentinels slowly

\* Grove.

parading their respective posts; but about fifty paces in front of the encampment, some sixty men, fully armed and accoutred, lay beside their horses, evidently prepared to act on the instant, while on every rising ground in the vicinity, videttes were posted, keeping a vigilant look out around. A little in advance of the sleepers were two persons on horseback, one of whom, from the instrument in his hand, was the trumpeter; while the second, from the richness of his costume, and the splendid animal he bestrode, was evidently the native officer commanding the party, and who frequently swept the scene before him with a field glass, as if in the expectation of some person or persons appearing.

A faint sound bursts upon the ear, at first indistinct, and scarcely audible even to the keenest sense of hearing; but faint as it was, the watchful partisan had caught it, and his keen gaze, and that of his followers, was at once turned in the direction from which it issued. It died away,—all again was still. Could he have been mistaken? Hark! once more it rings upon the ear, and this time with a distinctness that makes its familiar tones manifestly evident. It is the clear, sharp, ringing notes of a trumpet, the which, at a sign to his followers, is immediately answered by a blast

that rolls in prolonged echoes throughout the entire scene. The sleepers started from their slumbers, and with the rapidity of lightning were in their saddles.

In a quarter of an hour a large body of horsemen were seen riding towards the encampment, who were at once recognised as belonging to their own regiment, headed by their commander, who had departed upon a secret expedition the previous evening. Whatever was the service upon which they had proceeded, it had evidently proved unsuccessful, men and horses being dead beat with fatigue,—the former scarce able to keep their saddles, and many of the latter actually reeling under their riders,—an incident not to be wondered at, considering both had been in constant and incessant movement, without halt or refreshment of any kind, for nearly seventeen hours.

“Dismiss the men to the lines at once, Russuldar,”\* said Major Treton, a tall, fine, soldier-like looking man, about three or four and thirty years of age, addressing the native officer we have previously alluded to, as he rode towards him.

\* A rank in the regiments of the irregular cavalry in India, difficult to define in relation to English European corps, but very nearly answering to that of Adjutant Major as existing in the French service.

"Nothing," he continued, in answer to his glance of inquiry; "nothing, as usual. We have half killed our horses for no purpose whatever, if indeed, as I suspect, we have not been well fooled into the bargain."

He flung himself from his jaded charger as he spoke, and entering his tent, within a quarter of an hour afterwards the deepest stillness stole over the whole encampment, the greater part of its inmates being buried in profound slumber.

It was about two hours after midday, that, while scanning a rough chart of the country in which he was encamped, Major Treton's orderly entered the tent, ushering in a villager, the bearer of a despatch which had that moment arrived. The superscription was in the Persian character, and as the Englishman laid the letter on the table, he carelessly inquired whence it came. The man in reply stated, that it had been given him by a horseman about two miles off, who called to him as he was at work in the fields, and gave him two rupees to proceed and deliver it to the British Commandant, promising him a similar reward if he quickly returned with an answer. This information seemed in some measure to excite the officer's curiosity, and he was about opening the letter, when his eye fell upon the seal; for a moment

he gazed as if doubtful of the reality of what he beheld, then bursting it open, found a full confirmation of what he had deemed impossible.

It was the signet of the outlawed chieftain, Omeer Sing, and the communication from no less a person than the Rajah himself! After the usual compliments, the letter adverted in terms of raillery to the Major's unsuccessful chase the preceding night, and concluded with mentioning, that as he seemed so desirous of meeting him, if he would pledge his word of honour, as an officer and soldier, that no injury should be attempted towards him for a given period, the Rajah would do himself the pleasure of waiting upon his former friend and present adversary, when they might have the pleasure of a little chat together!

For a moment the Englishman seemed almost paralysed with the cool assurance the billet displayed. He was at first half disposed to believe the whole to be an attempt at a practical joke on the part of some of his brother officers; but on questioning the villager who brought the letter, his story was so plain and straightforward, and his evident impatience for an answer so great, that he might not lose the remainder of the reward promised him for his services, that he could no longer doubt the authenticity of the extraordinary



document that had been placed in his hands. Then occurred the thought, what motive could induce the chieftain to seek an interview? Was it with any intention to surrender? A smile crossed his features at the absurdity of the supposition, as he recalled to mind the chieftain's recent successful exploit, and the courage and ability with which he had baffled every attempt to put him down. Could it be, that, wearied with his present mode of life, he wished to ascertain if his reconciliation could not be accomplished with the English authorities, and was anxious to transmit, through himself, proposals to that effect? The idea, though not very probable, was not wholly impossible, and if so, he felt he should be acting right in acceding to the Rajah's demand, not only from the opening it would afford for putting an end to the harassing warfare in which the troops were engaged, without any apparent prospect of ever attaining a successful result, and which entailed the severest losses, and very little credit upon the Government itself; but from the sincere friendship he formerly,—shall we say, at the present period,—felt for the bold chieftain, and the inward conviction he could not but entertain of the injustice with which he had been treated.

His resolution was soon taken, instigated, per-

haps, in no slight degree by a lurking curiosity he vainly endeavoured to disguise; and seizing the writing materials which lay on the table before him, an answer was at once penned and despatched, granting a truce from the time at which it was sent off, till the conclusion of five hours after the period when the interview should terminate.

Lost in thought, Major Treton remained gazing for some time in the direction his messenger had taken; he then re-entered his tent and sat down; but it was evident the nervous impatience which pervaded him rendered any occupation out of the question. The chart was allowed to roll itself up; papers were glanced at and then flung aside; books, after the perusal of a few lines, sharing the same fate! An hour only, however, had elapsed since the departure of the villager, before three horsemen rode up to the encampment at a hand gallop, and proceeded direct towards the tent of its commander.

"Salaam Treton Sahib, my friend," said he who seemed to be their chief, as he flung himself from a high-blooded, powerful, bright bay Arab, and gave the reins to one of his attendants. "Salaam Captain Holroyd Sahib," addressing the second in command, who was standing by, and

who started in utter amazement as the voice reached his ears ; " Salaam Nuwuaab Sahib," he continued, turning to the Russuldar, who was also present. The stately old Mussulman was as brave as a lion, and moreover possessed in an eminent degree that calm gravity and placid dignity so characteristic of the higher orders professing the doctrines of the Faithful ; but the words, uttered in clear, ringing tones, simple as they were, had no sooner reached him than he hastily stepped back, with an expression of positive dismay in his countenance, and in a twinkling, his legs catching the tent ropes, his tall, portly figure was sprawling on the ground, with his heels most ingloriously in the air, to his great discomfiture. " By your favour, Treton Sahib, I will tell my servant to prepare my hookah ; its fumes are ever grateful alike to the wearied, or the vigorous and active."

Bold, calm, and self-confident, there was that in the demeanour of the Rajah which indicated either a sense of security, or indifference to danger, and the which imparted a tone and bearing to his mien that was evidently expressive of a naturally joyous nature, as he frankly advanced towards his enemies. Major Treton courteously extended his hand, and entering the tent they sat down together.

For a few minutes each gazed upon the other

with a lurking smile. The Englishman's countenance bore evident traces of the hard work and harassing duty of the preceding night, but on that of the Chieftain, no signs whatever of his having undergone the least degree of fatigue were in any way visible. He wore a snow-white quilted cotton vest, girt round with a rich shawl, in which rested a diamond-hilted dagger, while in his hand he carried a long basket-hilted back-sword, his whole appearance being expressive rather more of some powerful and opulent noble proceeding to the Durbar,\* than a careworn, toil-hunted outlaw, fighting for existence, on whose head a price was set, and who was beleaguered with active and vigilant enemies.

The carpet for the gorgeous hookah had been spread, its curling fumes arose in the tent, imparting a delicious fragrance around, but some time elapsed before Major Treton had sufficiently recovered from his surprise to inquire the object of the Rajah's visit.

"Nothing of any moment," was the prompt reply. "Knowing that you would be detained here for some hours, I was led to believe the face of an old friend, and a talk of past times, would, perhaps, not prove wholly unacceptable." There

\* Court.

was a slight touch of ironical malice in the Chieftain's tones, in alluding to the regiment's detention, as if he was well aware of its cause,—at least the Englishman thought so, as he bit his lip at the observation.

"I entertained some hopes," said the latter gravely, "that other reasons had actuated you in seeking me; this struggle cannot last for ever, and while there is yet time, and the door of reconciliation may not altogether be closed, is it not better to enter upon some path more calculated for your interests and safety, than following up a pursuit which must eventually terminate in unmitigated evil?"

The Rajah listened attentively as the Englishman spoke, and then fixed his eye steadily and keenly upon him as he replied, "What evil have I to look forward to, should it continue? In the intolerable oppression and injustice in which it originated, no one knows better than Major Treton, where, and to whom the blame is to be imputed. Scarce eighteen months have elapsed since I was driven like a felon from the home where my fathers and forefathers before me had dwelt for centuries in honour and security, unmolested in their rights by either Turk, Affghan, or Mogul, as each successive tide of conquest rolled over the land. It was for

a Government to do this, which prided itself upon its even-handed justice," he continued with intense bitterness; "but what have either they or their minions gained by it?"

"It does not behove me as a soldier," replied the Englishman, "to question the acts of my superiors; my duty is simply to receive orders and obey them. That the Government have met with severe and heavy losses from your followers I freely admit; but how long have you the capability of maintaining further resistance? Troops are everywhere assembling around you, and you will eventually be hemmed in beyond the possibility of escape: Colonel Smith's brigade has been ordered forward, and is already in the field——"

"Bah," said the Rajahpoot, in his usual joyous tones; "I am well aware of that, he always gives me due notice of his movements by his bugles."

"Then the force under General Poggleson has received an addition to its numbers of nearly two complete regiments, and——"

"Oh! confound the old ass," said the chieftain, with a yawn, "whenever I am near him, after hunting your detachments through the night, he not only fires his morning and evening gun, but makes such an uproar with his infernal drums and trumpets, that it is impossible for me to sleep: if

he does this with the intention of apprising me where he is encamped, or in what direction he is moving, he might save himself the trouble, for every action or movement on his part is made known to me the instant it has occurred. Briefly," continued the Chieftain in a graver tone; "there is but *one* adversary whose energy and activity I have reason to fear, and although I could, if so disposed, more than once have crushed him, I have for many considerations preferred the milder, and certainly to me the more amusing task of baffling and outwitting him."

The Major started, the Rajapoot smiled: "You are doubtful, Treton Sahib," he said, "Ya Allah il Allah, Mahomed resoul Allah;" and the voice of the high caste Hindoo chieftain became so changed into that of the Mahomedan faquir,\* that even the sharpest among the ears and eyes of the Faithful could never have detected the deception; the Englishman struck the table with his clenched fist, as he shouted, with an oath, "You, then, were the old faquir that led us the dance we have been engaged in throughout the whole night, and so suddenly disappeared among the bushes when we were led to believe you had brought us upon our prey?"

\* Religious mendicant.

The Rajah nodded; and, scarcely able to suppress his anger and vexation at the facility with which he had been duped, the Major was about to reply, when a horseman rode up at full speed, and dismounting at the tent, delivered in a large official letter. The Major glanced at the superscription, and then flung it upon the table, his present chafed mood apparently but little disposing him to open a communication that had reference, in all probability, to some dull routine of bureaucratic stupidity.

The Rajapoot chieftain drew a long breath at his hookah, and the water gurgled with a prolonged, loud, and clear echo through the tent. He slowly blew the cloud of fragrant smoke into the air, and said quietly, "You do not read your letter, Treton Sahib, though for the matter of that you may save yourself the trouble, as I can tell you its contents—it is from the Resident at L——, and intimates for your information, that at the period it reaches you, the outlaw Omeer Sing will be with you, under a guaranteed truce, in the which case, the solemn and pledged word of honour of a British Officer is not to be held binding when given to a proscribed enemy of the State: you are, accordingly, peremptorily enjoined to disregard the oath you have plighted, and cause



the said Omeer Sing to be seized, and given up to justice."

The Rajah delivered this intimation without in the least deviating from his usual composure, and at its conclusion very quietly resumed his hookah ; but the Englishman, clutching the letter, broke open the envelope, and as he perused its contents, his countenance became pale with suppressed passion. He tore the paper to pieces as he finished reading it, and dashing it on the ground, trampled upon the fragments with his heavy boot.

" You, at least," he said, addressing the Rajah, " never believed me capable of such baseness ?"

" I should have done my friend injustice," replied the Chieftain gravely, " could I have deemed the subject worthy even a moment's thought ; and deep and bitter as the enmity may be subsisting between your people and myself, and whatever I may think of them in other respects, I will at least do them the justice to say that not one in a thousand would have acted otherwise than you have done in the present instance. But you are, doubtless, anxious to know," he continued, resuming his usual tone and manner, " how I became acquainted with the information I have imparted to you ; and I will frankly tell you, that I myself apprised your respectable Political Chief of my intended interview,

receiving from a friend at the Durbar a hint of what I full well felt assured would be his course of proceeding on the intelligence reaching him."

"It must cut short our interview," said the Major, after a moment's reflection, "as I know not what other measures he may have taken which may compromise the truce I have given of five hours after you have quitted our encampments."

"Set your mind at rest on that question," returned the Rajah; "within half an hour from this time you are a free agent, to act in any way you think proper."

He resigned his hookah as he spoke to his attendants, whom he desired to bring round the horses, and rising, proceeded to the door of the tent, followed by his host. Loitering near were many of the soldiery, including a number of their officers, who gazed upon him with wonder, curiosity, and respect. He courteously waved towards them the usual salaam, and as his gallant charger came up, once more tendered his hand to the Major, as he said, "Farewell, Treton Sahib, may we once more meet, under happier and better auspices than the present."

The Englishman clasped the hand extended to him, inwardly repeating the wish expressed with hearty good will. The Rajah vaulted into the

saddle, and again saluting those around, rode, leisurely and quietly, followed by his attendants, in the direction from whence he came, Major Treton and his horsemen gazing after them till their figures were no longer visible.

The place was surrounded, and the Outlaw Chief had been tracked to the fortress of Sha-poora, which for centuries had formed the stronghold of his family. Five complete regiments of British cavalry were around, only awaiting the arrival of their guns and infantry, expected the following morning, either to carry the place by assault, or to open a regular siege. The former course was thought the most probable, since, strong as the fort undoubtedly was, it was known to be wholly unprepared for a prolonged resistance, being destitute of magazines, and its ramparts scarcely armed; while, however resolute the garrison, they were known to be but few in number, and could scarcely be deemed to have been reinforced by the body of brilliant horsemen that entered the gates with the Rajah, who were wholly unfitted for such a service.

On two sides the fortress opened upon an extensive plain, covered with fertile fields, and dotted with flourishing villages. On the third the broad,

deep river ran under its very walls ; while on the fourth was a dense, thick forest, some of the trees of which seemed almost, in their closely spread foliage, to overshadow the ramparts, as since the decay of the Mogul empire, from the commencement of the last century, when the utility of the fort as a strong military post and place of refuge had comparatively ceased to exist, the jungle had been permitted to increase, from its forming a large and excellent *rumna*\* for the sports of the field, to which the rulers of the country, like others of their race, were passionately attached.

On the open space we have mentioned as forming two sides of the fortress, a regiment of dragoons, and two corps of regular Native cavalry were picketed, a short distance beyond gun-shot range of the place. A third, with a party of Skinner's Horse, skirted the borders of the forest, while the remainder of the latter were posted along the opposite banks of the river, though there was little probability of anything being attempted in that quarter, from the stream at this time, in addition to its great depth, running with extreme violence.

The out and in-lying pickets were placed, and outposts thrown out connecting the different corps with each other ; but throughout the force, though

\* Preserve.

the bits were withdrawn from the horses' mouths, to enable them to feed, and the girths were slackened, the saddles still remained upon the animals' backs, a measure of precaution which the resolute and energetic character of their daring enemy, now brought to bay, had perhaps suggested might not be wholly unnecessary.

On the extreme left front of the dragoons, in the direction of the jungle, was a party of twelve of the regiment, commanded by a serjeant, who were seasoning a hasty evening meal, certainly not of the most plentiful description, with anecdotes of former campaigns, fun, and adventure, some of which elicited no slight merriment among its hearers.

"And by the powers, Mike," said Pat Donovan, the serjeant, addressing one of the youngest troopers, "you're not far wrong there; in campaigning, as elsewhere, some people contrive to carry the silver spoons in their mouths along with them, and in one instance, at least, I must say it occurred to myself."

"Ay, indeed, Serjeant," said the whole party with one voice, and in a tone of the most eager curiosity, "do let's hear it."

"Well, boys," said Mr. Donovan, leaning on his sabre with an air of the most patronising con-

descension, "You must know that I first came to this country in the 14th Foot, in which I served two years previous to being transferred to 'Ours.' We were at Allighur, and tough work we had of it before the place was taken from the stout-hearted, one-armed old Frenchman who held it.\* A few days before the storming took place, Colonel Skinner's Yellow Jackets—those in the jungle yonder—entered the British service; a good thing for us, it was said, at the time, not only from our enemy being minus such a splendid body of dashing fellows, but from our then being desperately badly off for cavalry, in consequence of which, and the clouds of the enemy's horse, which hovered round us, cutting off our commissariat supplies, short commons was too often the order of the day. Well, the storming took place, and the light company to which I belonged was one of the first in,—hard work it was by the same, but once over, it was—'Gentlemen, help yourselves!'—the which our fellows did pretty freely. I had well stuffed my haversack with gold pieces, and had shoved several gold bangles† and other ornaments into my cap; so with a large bag of rupees upon my shoulder, I thought I might as well cut, and stow it away in

\* General Perron.

† A description of heavy, massive bracelet.

a place of safety. I accordingly made my way to the gates, into which camp followers and rascals of every kind were now pouring in crowds, some of whom looked hardly at me as I passed out.— Somehow their looks did not please me, and I had hardly got fifty yards from the fort, before misgivings came over me ; so I looked around to see if none of our fellows, or indeed any red coat, was in view, to whom I could offer to go halves if he would accompany me to camp, and take an equal chance of our having our throats cut. Not one, however, could I see, and I had just sprung my musket with the ramrod to see that the cartridge was well home, and had looked to my flint and priming, when I saw one of the Yellow Jackets, our newly enlisted troops, sauntering leisurely along. ‘Hallo, comrade,’ said I, ‘you’re all too late, if you expect to get anything where you are going ; all’s up by this time, I can tell you ; but you may see I’m not empty handed, and if you’ll just give me your escort to camp, for better for worse, as they say, we’ll go shares in the booty.’ ‘With all my heart, my man,’ he replied, in such perfect English as made me stare ; ‘you incur great risk in proceeding, but rest assured I will stand by you.’ I looked at my new comrade as he spoke, scarcely able to make him out ; he was dark, and

swarthy, dressed exactly as I had seen all the other Yellow Jackets, but he had an eye like a hawk, with a something about him which gave me the idea of his being a fellow well up to his work, and pluck to the bone. We moved on, and sure enough what I had anticipated, and the stranger foretold, very soon came to pass; for within two hundred yards of our camp, no less than seven fellows well armed rushed at us. I dropped the heavy bag of rupees at my feet, and let fly at the foremost, who gave a tremendous spring and fell for'ard, the shot having gone slap through his brain; a second received my bayonet in his heart, but whether owing to its not having been greased, or to its having carried along with it some of the fellow's cotton jacket, it stuck fast for a minute, and before I could withdraw it, the sabre of a third glanced across my eyes, uplifted to cut me down; but just as I thought it was all 'Dickey' with me, another flashed between us, and the head of my friend, like a spent cannon ball, whisked past me, having been promptly dismissed from its shoulders by my new comrade, whom I now turned to assist, a desperate tug having enabled me to release my bayonet.—Och! by the powers, it was but little assistance he needed,—heads with him seemed like cabbage-stalks: the whole business,



long as I have been relating it, was scarcely the affair of a minute; it was just so,—so,—so,—” continued the serjeant, describing with the minutest accuracy the first cuts of the sword exercise, “and three other heads dropped with all the rapidity and facility of the first, the owner of the one remaining taking to his trotters as if the very devil was after him. Well, my yellow jacketed friend having carefully wiped and cleaned his sword, the which he did with as much coolness and composure as if he had been eating his breakfast, I again took up the heavy bag, and we reached our lines without any further attempt being made upon us. Arrived in camp, I flung the bag and everything else along with it upon the ground, and said, ‘I’ll tell you what it is, brother, I’m blest if it isn’t you to give me what you like, instead of my sharing with you, as but for your help I should not only have lost everything, but have stood a pretty fair chance of being in kingdom come into the bargain.’ ‘Keep all you have got, my good fellow,’ he replied, in the same perfect English as before, “I am happy in having had the opportunity of rendering you so slight a service, and only request you to drink your next glass to the health and prosperity of ——”

“Who?” was the general query, in tones of the most eager and impatient curiosity.

"Who should you think, boys?" said the serjeant, as if he enjoyed the excited attention of his auditory.

"Not ould Nick, please the saints!" said Mike Callaghan, doubtfully.

"Sure it was no other than Colonel Skinner himself!—but hallo," continued the serjeant, "talk of the devil,—here come the Horse themselves,—where can they be going to?"

As he spoke a body of cavalry in the well-known yellow tunics, and red turbands, and cummerbunds of Skinner's Irregular Horse, issued from the wood, and forming up in two lines, proceeded at a sharp trot towards the spot where the dragoons were picketed. The sun had set, and the evening was closing in as the horsemen were about midway between the fortress and the Europeans.

"By Saint Patrick," said Mike Callaghan, in tones of unrepressed admiration, "thim fellows are well mounted, serjeant, the pick of our whole regiment would niver come up to them,—botheration! but this is a queer sort of a manœuvre."

The interjection of Mr. Michael Callaghan had, undoubtedly, some grounds for its assertion, and was quickly followed by the voice of their commander shouting out, "Stand by your horses."

The phenomenon which had caused this stir was, certainly, of a most puzzling and perplexing

nature. The horsemien who had debouched from the wood were within musket shot of the dragoons, the usual challenge being answered by the anticipated reply of "Skinner's Horse," given in a loud, clear, ringing voice. It had, however, scarcely issued from the mouth of the speaker, before a second body of cavalry, in which were distinguished the sky blue uniforms of the regulars, intermingled with yellow tunics, and red turbands, came tearing round the verge of the wood, as if in hot pursuit. It was the singularity of this sudden appearance which produced the sensation adverted to, and which seemed the more particularly to impress those moving in their front, as increasing their pace to a sharp gallop, they ultimately terminated in a furious rush in closing upon the line of the dragoons, when all at once the same ringing voice was heard in the cry of "Shumsheer be dust."\* With the rapidity of lightning the yellow costume disappeared, each rider appearing clad in complete mail, as they rushed like a whirlwind through the ranks of their unsuspecting opponents, who were knocked over, and ridden down before the greater

\* A Persian expression, the literal translation of which is, "By force of the Sword," but among the natives of India is used as a signal of conflict, equivalent, perhaps, to the old English phrase of "Fall on."

part even could spring into their saddles.—Through and through they went, dashing along with a force that nothing could withstand. The native regular cavalry, in rear of the dragoons, were somewhat better prepared, but before their horses could gather into anything like the impetus of speed requisite for a charge, their adversaries were upon them with the force of a thunderbolt, bearing down all before them, and in another instant were far—far away!

A hot pursuit was ordered, and for some time continued, but fatigued with the long march they had undergone previous to the investment of the fortress, the horses became incapable of further exertion, and the trumpets blew the recall! Their active enemy had escaped, and once again the harassing, and it would appear futile efforts for crushing him would have to be renewed, with, in all probability, little better success than those already attempted.

Joy and gladness reigned throughout Shapoorar; the bazaars were brilliantly illuminated, cannon thundered, and musquetry rattled; myriads of rockets flew into the air, the signal for a gorgeous display of fireworks, throughout the entire range of the old fortress; troops of dancing girls dis-

played their light and graceful movements to crowds of spectators, the immense numbers of whom would seem to intimate that the whole population of the Jaghire had rushed to the place, to participate in the exultation and rejoicing caused by the restored rank and dignities, and honourable return of the gallant and well-loved chieftain, their hereditary ruler, the Rajah Omeer Sing Bahadoor! no longer the outlawed and hunted fugitive, but the trusty and highly esteemed tributary of the all-powerful British sovereignty.

How this desirable and equitable, though certainly wholly unexpected event had occurred, was owing to one of those providential checks which Red Tape occasionally receives before its proceedings have altogether terminated in irrevocable disgrace or disaster to the State it professes to serve, and which, in this instance, its imbecility and folly had already created in a sufficient degree, to attract in a particular manner the attention of the then head of the Government.

The able, accomplished, and estimable nobleman, who then ruled over our Eastern empire, (alas! when will India see his like again!) had not very long previous entered upon his high office. With his usual profound sagacity and far-seeing wisdom, he already discerned the clouds gathering in the

distance, which foreboded the storm which, three years later,\* burst forth over the whole of India, from the northernmost frontier to the most southern provinces ; and while silently and surely collecting his strength to be prepared for the shock, he cast a glance of anxiety among the native princes and tributaries of the British Government, to ascertain upon whom among them he felt assured he could place implicit reliance.

The daring courage, skilful and enterprising conduct, united to the forbearance and humanity displayed by the fugitive Rajah, Omeer Sing, in his various forays and expeditions against the British forces, had for some time past attracted his attention; and, coupled with the devoted and unshaken fidelity of his adherents and the peasantry, gradually instilled doubts into his mind as to whether the circumstances of the case as reported to him had been diligently and searchingly inquired into. Doubt once engendered, in spite of Red Tape assurances, and positive assertions as to

\* The Mahratta Confederacy and Pindaree War, the excesses committed in which by the enemy were frequently too hideous and revolting to be even mentioned. It was during this war that terrible scourge the cholera first made its appearance, and broke out in the Marquis of Hastings's camp in 1818, creating a horror and panic which only those who remember it can sufficiently portray.

everything being right and proper, the Governor-General thought fit to make inquiries himself, and those of so keen and scrutinising a nature, that the real truth of the history became very quickly divulged, and rendered it clearly evident, that if Omeer Sing had been a rebel, a traitor, and a robber, as his enemies had described him, it certainly was only after unwearied and unceasing exertions on their part that he had become so, since in all the annals of spoliation and injustice with which British Indian history has too frequently been stained, a more flagrant example than that manifested in the present instance had rarely, if ever, occurred.

Convinced by the information which reached him on all sides, now that the channel for obtaining it was fairly opened, of the vindictive oppression to which the Rajahpoot chieftain had been subjected, the Governor-General, with his usual promptitude, immediately entered upon measures for repairing it. Orders were first of all sent to the different military commanders to stop further hostilities, and march the troops back to their respective stations and cantonments. This measure accomplished, to the consternation of the Red Tapists, overtures were made to the chieftain, commencing with an expression of the deepest regret for the injuries he had sustained, from the false accusations

brought against him, to which too much credit had unfortunately been attached, but the true nature of which had since been most satisfactorily established; and that as the Government were now made aware of the wrong they had committed, they would repair it to the utmost of their power by the Rajah's restoration to all his former authority, honours, and estates, only stipulating that he on his part should renew his oath of fealty to the British power, and restore to a certain extent the large amount of treasure captured by his horsemen, during the period hostilities prevailed.

As the character of the noble ruler of India was well known, and these proposals were transmitted through Major Treton, the Rajah at once as frankly and honourably acceded to them; and when true and loyal intentions are entered upon in all truth and sincerity, but little time is lost in carrying them into execution. The result we have told; and if anything could add to the satisfaction of the Rajah on the occasion, it was the resumption by his old friend of his former political duties. By him on the night in question was he invested with the Khelaat,\* in the name of the British Government, and by him was presented, in that of its illustrious head, with a beautiful sabre of great value, which the

\* Dress of Honour.



chieftain, with every mark of gratitude and reverence, pressed to his head and heart.

It only remains to be added, that in the Pindarree war, which the great statesman and soldier had so truly foreseen, his policy, dictated by justice and good faith, was well rewarded in the ally it secured ; for, led by their active and enterprising Prince, few troops under the British standard were so dreaded by these marauders, from the terrible havoc they made among them, as the brilliant horsemen of the Rajah Omeer Sing.

A

TOUR THROUGH THE DECCAN,

BY

THE RUINS OF BEEJAPPOOR, BEEDER, AURUNGABAD,  
ROZA, AND ELLORA.

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THERE are, perhaps, few subjects possessing so much interest to the traveller in India, as the magnificent remains of former Moorish grandeur visible in the decayed or ruined capitals of the Mahometan sovereigns of former years. The vast and colossal monuments of Hindoo or Bhuddist architecture will remain, in all probability, like their prototypes in Egypt, objects for the curiosity and wonder of future ages, long, perhaps, after the British rule will have ceased in India; but the traces of the Mussulman sway, strong and durable as many of them are, even in their gorgeous elegance, seem destined to follow in the track of their former power and greatness, and wholly pass away. In no instance does this

observation so particularly, I may say so painfully apply, as to the unrivalled and picturesque scene presented by the city of Beejapoor, as the splendid ruins of that once extensive capital, on approaching from the south, burst as it were upon the view. It stands upon the bottom of a long range of undulating ground, of no great magnitude in point of height, but which entirely conceals the whole, from the abruptness of the ascent on the other side.

It was about sunrise that our party, consisting of three brother-officers and myself, gained the crest of the ridge, and beheld the vast piles of innumerable buildings that seemed to rise almost by magic before us,—domes with their gilded crescents, minarets, towers, and palaces, intermixed with lofty trees, extending everywhere, and on every spot where the eye could rést; the whole presenting a picture which fancy at the moment could have imputed to the effect produced only by mirage \* on the disordered vision. As if actuated by the same feeling, each on the instant reined up his horse, and sat gazing on the scene before him.

\* “Not the ruins of Palmyra itself were equal to the fantastic visions of splendid cities, fertile groves, and magnificent rivers, which, owing to mirage, a species of mist produced by the extreme heat, seemed constantly presented to view in our journey across the desert.”—*D’Herbelot*.

It seemed that some of the fabled descriptions of the Arabian Nights were about to be verified, and we could almost, at the moment, have placed reliance upon that part of Schehezerade's history relating to the diamonds, wealth, and merchandise, as well as power, extent, and magnificence of this once celebrated city! There is but one drawback to the romance of the picture thus portrayed, which is, that long before you even reach the gates admitting you to its interior, you are well apprised of the difference between what it *was*, and what it *is*!

This melancholy truth every instant forced itself upon our minds with the greater degree of conviction, as we pursued our way through its desolate and noiseless streets, once resounding with the busy hum of countless multitudes, to our quarters at the Jumna Musjeed, or mosque, a building, with its vast and spacious dome, (the third in the world,)\* which, from the powerful and massive materials of which it is constructed, will in all probability stand for centuries longer. From the upper gallery of this magnificent structure you have a full and complete view, not only of the entire city, but the surrounding country; the whole

\* They stand as follows:—Saint Sophia's, Constantinople; Saint Peter's, Rome; the Mosque at Beejapoor; the fourth is Saint Paul's, in London.

of which to the northward exhibits a melancholy state of barrenness and desolation, owing to the reservoirs and wells of the capital, from which all its supplies of water were drawn, being choked up and destroyed.

The breaches made by the cannon of Aurungzebe, when he besieged the city in 1689, are still the same as when he drew off his army to Upper Hindostan; the various powers into whose hands Beejapoor has since then fallen, whether owing to the uncertain nature of their tenure or other causes, never having repaired them. Though the wall itself is of immense strength, being composed of the most solid masonry, from constant neglect it has fallen in many places, and even some of its strong and massive towers have served, in more instances than one, to fill the ditch which surrounds the whole circuit of the fortifications. On every side the eye rests upon the same picture of desolation; nor could I, from the spot where I stood, discover one single building, with the exception of some few mosques and mausoleums, that bore any impress of what it had been, unless from the extent of its scattered ruins.

As there was no sporting of any kind in the neighbourhood, the whole of the period of our stay was given to rambling through the ruined city, and

had either of us been possessed of a proper degree of antiquarian research and enterprise, I have no doubt the result would have been sundry learned and eloquent disquisitions, which would have proved of considerable benefit in enlightening all genuine lovers of the antique. Unfortunately, however, (if the truth must be told,) the moments of our intermediate time, instead of being devoted to study and reflections upon the data, strata, or any other kind of "ata" of what we had a few minutes previously witnessed, were chiefly devoted to the discussion of sundry viands of cold meat, and a highly refreshing liquid, composed of Hodgson's pale ale, slightly intermixed with spices, and a proportion of good old Madeira, and generally known by the classical denomination of "Mug;" a beverage, with which as I suppose most of my readers are pretty well acquainted, I need not trespass upon their time by entering into any further discussion regarding its merits.

The fort exhibits considerable strength; its interior was exclusively devoted to the palaces of the sovereign and the nobility of his household. Most of them were evidently constructed of the most massive material; notwithstanding which, however, the workmanship invariably exhibits that minute elegance belonging to the Saracenic order

of architecture, intermingled with the richest mosaic and enamel painting; but the whole is at present such a mass of heterogeneous ruin, that even the site of one building is scarcely to be distinguished from another. The most singular object of curiosity in this part, is a representation (frightfully resembling the reality) of the head of the unfortunate Ram Rajah, the last Hindoo sovereign of the neighbouring kingdom of Beejanuggur, whose territories were invaded, and subsequently divided between the four Mahomedan Sultans of the Deccan,\* the unfortunate Hindoo losing his life in the contest. This peculiarly Asiatic ornament is placed to the right of the gateway as you pass over the bridge into the citadel. It exhibits the appearance of being newly severed from the body, still distilling goutts of blood, and the *tout ensemble* of so ghastly a character, that had I been alive in those days, I am pretty certain I never could have passed the spot without feeling my head wag on my shoulders.

In a small mosque, built, I believe, by Ali Adil Shah, is a relic of the very highest order, being nothing more nor less than a hair of the Prophet's whisker! Drapery of our Lady of Loretto—(I have

\* The kings of Beejapoor, Golconda, Dawlutabad, and Ahmednuggur.

omitted terming it by its proper name, as I believe it is considered indelicate to mention ladies' wearing apparel by their own especial cognisances,) Saint Laurence's gridiron, or Saint Dunstan's tongs, hide your diminished heads! In what consist your claims to sanctity in comparison with this? To the extreme mortification of my companions, as well as myself, we found that no Giaour could be favoured with ocular demonstration of this most precious and revered relic. Considerably disappointed and by no means pleased at this declaration, in a fit of spleen I hinted my belief that the relic in question had its origin in the visionary districts of the brain of the old Moollah who acted as *cicerone* on the occasion. In a rage he replied that no mind but that of a Christian could have entertained so impious a thought, adding that the Holy Prophet, (to whom all praise be due!) on the occasion of having his beard trimmed, had bequeathed the hair in question to one of his most zealous followers, by whom it had been brought to India, and at length subsequently found its way to the immortal city of Beejapoor.

The mosque and adjoining tomb of Ibrahim Adil Shah are still in considerable repair, notwithstanding the ravages of the Mahrattas. This magnificent structure, which these hordes of plun-



derers wantonly endeavoured to destroy, is built of stone, in a style of the very first order of oriental architecture. It is asserted, (for I was not scholar enough to ascertain myself,) that the whole of the Koran, from the commencement of the first chapter to the last, is cut on the exterior of the building. It certainly is covered with Arabic characters, and beautifully executed. One of the pillars is nearly destroyed by an enormous shot, which the Mahrattas fired from a short distance into the building; in all probability they would have completed their work of destruction had they not been compelled to retreat.

Perhaps the greatest curiosity in Bejapoor is the immense gun, said to have been cast by Aurungzebe to commemorate his conquest of the city, which lies on one of the ruined bastions on the western side. This tremendous piece of artillery is upwards of one-and-thirty feet in length, with a diameter at the muzzle upwards of nine. On inquiring of our guide if it had ever been discharged, he pointed to the ruined bastion, which, he assured us, tradition said had fallen beneath the shock, while the waters of all the neighbouring wells and reservoirs from the same reason had fled, never to return! Our communicative *cicerone* was proceeding with a further detail of marvellous circumstances connected

with the incident in question, when an uproarious shout of laughter from the whole of his assembled audience caused him to pause; upon which observing, from the distended mouths and other unequivocal signs of the mirth of his hearers, that the valuable knowledge he was imparting had merely afforded food for their heretical ridicule, with an air of offended dignity, as a punishment for their disbelief, he resolved that all further information he was possessed of should be confined to himself, and in no way given towards enlightening persons who had treated the records of history with such sceptical rudeness!

In the Laul Baugh, or Red Garden, lies buried one of the younger sons of the emperor Aurungzebe, who died of a fever during the period his father was engaged in the siege. The spot is merely marked by a highly polished slab of red porphyry, surmounted by a smaller one of white marble; that able, though unprincipled despot, whatever may have been his passion for pomp and parade in life, having always expressed the utmost contempt for funereal pageantry.

After a stay of nearly three weeks, we moved forward on our journey to Aurungabad, taking the cities of Kulburga and Beeder *en route*. The former exhibits but few traces of having been

the capital of a kingdom, with the exception of the walls, which are of considerable extent, while the population does not exceed that of a large village. The latter still retains several very handsome mosques and other buildings, both in the suburbs and in the city itself, the architecture of many of the former being of the first order. Beeder still forms a nominal Soubadarry, or viceroyalty, but the efforts of this functionary to uphold the dignity of his office by occasionally surrounding himself with all the rabble of the neighbourhood, in lieu of the gay Suwarree\* that formerly appertained to his high station, form a picture painfully ludicrous.

On the 13th we arrived at Aurungabad, whose splendid tomb, as a Mussulman truly said, when contrasting the state of the city at the present period with its former flourishing prosperity under the sway of the Mogul sovereigns, "stood like a blooming rose in the midst of a desert;" and never, certainly, was the figurative though energetic description of the Asiatic more happily applied than in the present instance. On emerging from clouds of dust, amid long, dirty, narrow streets, abounding in every description of squalid filth and misery, you find yourself opposite the magnificent

\* Retinue.

gateway forming the entrance to the garden in which this superb building is situated.

Truly indeed might Vitelli, an Italian artist, say when he beheld it, "that a glass case to cover the whole was only wanting to complete it." Instead of gravel you tread upon a pavement of the most highly polished porphyry, of which costly material the walks of the garden are composed, the various orange-trees, shrubs, and flowers being partitioned off by screens of a highly wrought description. Down the centre of each walk are white marble fountains, the play of which, however, is silent now, the pipes and communications leading to them being either choked up or destroyed. Passing up the middle one, you approach the mausoleum, the whole of which, with its lofty minarets, is of white marble. The central arch forms the entrance, and by a small flight of steps you descend into the interior, and then behold a picture well qualified to strike the spectator with astonishment and admiration; for of so exquisitely wrought and highly finished a character is the architecture, that, coupled with the dazzling purity of the marble, you can at the moment almost fancy the entire fabric to be the produce of the loom instead of the chisel!

Enclosed within a richly fretted screen, of a character, if possible, of even a higher order than

the rest, and covered with crimson velvet, is the spot where lie the remains of a favourite daughter of Aurungzebe, who died during the period of the Emperor's expedition to the frontiers of Cashmere, and over whom this superb edifice was erected by the Viceroy of Aurungabad ; who, in adopting the measure, however, met with the severest reprehension from his sovereign for this pompous but useless expenditure of the public treasure. It is singular the resemblance the whole bears to the sarcophagi of the Medici at Florence.\* that monument of the power of the merchant princes is still unfinished, but were it otherwise, its classic beauty and its costly material would be alike secondary to the noble pile before you.

\* "Beautiful as it is," says Major Scherer, in his *Tour through the North of Italy*, in allusion to this beautiful specimen of Florentine sculpture, "yet I have seen others of a far nobler and richer character; need I say that I allude to those splendid monuments of former grandeur left by the Mogul emperors in the plains of Hindostan?"

There are many who assert that both the tombs at Agra and Aurungabad must have been built under the superintendence of Italians. Though this admits of probability, it by no means amounts to a certainty. For the supersession of the Gothic, and the introduction of a lighter and more graceful order of architecture, Europe was indebted to her Saracen invaders; and, with the exception of Saint Peter's at Rome and a few others, it may be doubted if any buildings of a subsequent period will bear comparison in elegance and beauty with the splendid remains of Oriental structure still visible in Sicily and the south of Spain.

On each side of the garden are serais, or public places, devoted in former days to the use of the followers of the Prophet for their rest and refreshment; two of them are floored with red marble, each slab having an alternate line of red and black around it, which produces a very singular, though not unpleasing effect.

Though no less than fifty thousand rupees are annually given by the Nizam's government towards keeping the establishment in repair, the whole is fast going to ruin. The garden exhibits but one continual scene of waste and desolation; the trellis-work and screens being on every side defaced and destroyed, the shrubs and flowers torn up, and the trees decayed. We were told, I know not with what truth, that of the sum allowed for maintaining the grounds and building, not one rupee was ever appropriated to that purpose; that the Nizam, piqued at the refusal of the British minister at his court to concur in his project of pulling down the whole, and transferring the materials to Hyderabad, for the purpose of erecting a mausoleum for his own family in the capital, had allowed the sum in question to be embezzled by those to whose charge the care of the building was entrusted, without even instituting any inquiry as to how it was applied. It surely would not be any stretch of arbitrary

power on the part of the British Government, nor be deemed an unjust interference, were their representative instructed to hint their wishes that this noble structure, the second in India, should not be left to fall a sacrifice at the shrine of ignorance, caprice, and avarice.

On the 24th we resumed our route to Doulutabad, which celebrated fortress, from the kindness of the British resident at the Court of the Nizam, (who forwarded us a pass for the occasion, without which no one is ever permitted to enter the interior,) we had every facility afforded us of viewing. This old form is still strictly adhered to, and originated in former days in the place having been the deposit of immense treasures, from the consideration of its being regarded as completely impregnable. Its greatest curiosity is the extensive subterraneous passage, which winds round the whole of the fortifications, nearly to the summit of the rock, a work of unparalleled, almost superhuman labour. The gratification, however, derived from an inspection of this wonderful work of art is not without its alloy; as, what with the heat of the sun, which playing constantly upon the rock from which the passage is excavated, renders its temperature not unlike that of an oven, together with the smoke and smell from the torches, which you are

necessarily compelled to take with you, the effect almost amounts to actual suffocation ; and never shall I forget the feeling as it were of new life that shot through the whole frame on our once more emerging into the light of day.

The town, situated at the base of the rock, was formerly of considerable extent, and possessed a large population ; indeed, one of the Mogul emperors passed a considerable part of his reign there, and once contemplated, it is said, making it his capital in preference to Delhi. It is now entirely in ruins, the only object worthy of observation being a minaret of immense height, erected by Aurunzebe after the surrender of the place to the Imperial arms, but of which, from its rickety state, it is by no means deemed safe to attempt the ascent.

From thence we moved on to the small though - beautifully situated town of Roza, a spot held in the highest degree of reverence by the Mussulman population of the country, from the number of saints and holy men of that religion who are buried there, and whose tombs, rising in the midst of the bold and picturesque scenery around, form a tableau at once striking and pleasing. The object that most forcibly claims the attention of the passing traveller is the plain red marble slab, which, situated close to the rich shrine of one of the



holiest of the Imaums, marks the spot which forms the last resting-place of Aurunzebe, the simple monument of that fearful and all-powerful sovereign; forming a striking contrast to the highly wrought marble screen, inlaid with jasper, agate, and cornelians, which surrounds the remains of the being who, during his life-time, was as great an object of ridicule and indifference as the former was of dread, admiration, or terror.

The air was cold and bracing, and breakfast over, we took our guns, resolved to range the adjoining jungles till dinner-time, as game of every description abounds here, though some of a kind we by no means felt disposed to encounter; as sometimes, in pursuing a hare, the sportsman should be on his guard lest he by chance stumble upon a tiger—an incident in this part of the world by no means of uncommon occurrence: however, we sallied forth, and after several hours' prosperous sport, without meeting any forest adversaries disposed to interfere with our pastime, we returned to the old mosque, which we had constituted our head-quarters and sitting-room, and around which our tents were pitched.

After dinner we again moved out, though taking a different route to that pursued in the morning. We had arrived at a circular sheet of water,—which

had secured the classical designation of the "Punch Bowl," from the circumstance of its being entirely enclosed by a circle of small hills,—when up sprang two uncommonly fine large pea-fowl;—crack! crack! went every fowling-piece on the instant; but, whether owing to the advance of evening, or an optical delusion caused by the vigorous discussion during our recent period of mastication of a more than usually excellent batch of Lafitte, or some other cause which I cannot determine, certain it is that everybody missed with the exception of one of the party, who was some fifty or sixty yards behind the rest, and of whose accuracy of aim we soon received ample proof in the exclamation of "Oh, Lord! my ——!" which, roared with stentorian energy, proceeded from my nearest neighbour, who, with his hand applied to that part of the human frame generally expressed by a very simple, but somewhat anti-euphonious term, which modesty compels us to leave blank, was executing a variety of pirouettes and demivoltes, sufficient to have excited the admiration and envy of the ablest terpsichorist upon record.

It appeared that the sportsman from whom the shot proceeded, who on most occasions bore great reputation on the score of missing, had been left, as before-mentioned, considerably behind. He

was enlivening the monotony of his walk by an occasional hiccup, when the rapid and successive discharge of so many fowling-pieces bursting upon his ear, resolved him not to be behind-hand with the rest in the exhilarating noise that added so much to the interest of the scene: accordingly, without losing time in going through the unmeaning ceremony of taking aim, he let fly both barrels, which occasioned the forcible invasion of the system of osteology of the sufferer previously alluded to, the attack being aggravated by the circumstance of the part in question being of a size and calibre, that would have even experienced some difficulty in introducing itself into the capacious unmentionable part of the wearing apparel of Hendric Hudson, or some other equally celebrated Dutch navigator of the North Atlantic, which was usually devoted to covering that respected portion of the human frame. Fortunately, however, the distance being so great, little or nothing was the consequence, beyond the pain inflicted by the application, which the person *best qualified to judge* declared he could liken to nothing else but a huge bunch of thistles in full, continued, and vigorous play!

For several days after this we were occupied in viewing the far-famed Caves of Ellora, which are excavated from the bottom of the range of trap

and granite hills upon which the town of Roza is situated. These stupendous works of human art and ingenuity (which Bishop Heber, in his interesting Journal, has so truly termed as deserving the first place among the Wonders of the world, and a sight of which alone was in itself inducement enough for a voyage to the Indian shores), presenting so great a similarity to the architectural monuments and colossal figures of Egypt, and remarkable for an equal degree of remote antiquity attached to them, afford an inexhaustible field for the research of the enterprising antiquary and historian.

Their history, the period when made, and the object of such a work of superhuman labour, are buried in the deepest obscurity, where it is to be feared they must ever remain; for no sooner does the traveller arrive at what he deems, in his own mind, satisfactory conclusions as to what he witnesses in one part, than all his preconceived opinions are at once thrown to the ground by what meets his view in another; for, singular as it may appear, it is no less true, that in the very same excavated chamber you will alike find emblems of the jarring and conflicting religions of Brahma and Boodh.

The range extends for nearly a mile and a half, the two Caves most remarkable being those of the

Temple of Keilas, and the Carpenter's Cave. The former is a complete building, standing by itself, hewn out of the entire rock, of Hindoo origin, and exhibiting sculpture of the very highest order, with two colossal pillars of the most finished description, standing by themselves in advance of the main body of the work. The latter, of an inferior kind, causes however greater astonishment in the mind of the western beholder, from its being, in some degree, similar to the Gothic, and its singular resemblance, in many points, to the nave of a cathedral.

The Brahmins of the neighbourhood have so many astonishing narratives connected with the whole, that I cannot bring myself to publish even one, lest the reputation of our own historic narrator and traveller, Baron Munchausen, should be injured by the recital; his wondrous adventures being ordinary and everyday occurrences when placed in comparison with those related by our Indian informants.

A disagreeable adventure occurred on the evening of the last day of our rambles among the caves, that by no means tended to enhance the pleasure of our excursion. We had all retired for the night and, heartily fatigued, were buried in profound sleep, when the most tremendous uproar that ever burst upon mortal ears effectually

aroused us from our slumbers. The shouts of the servants, the bellowing of cattle, and the yelping of curs, all forming an united chorus better conceived than described.

I started up, and by the light of the moon, which shone with considerable brilliancy, perceived within fifteen yards of the tent a tiger of the largest size, which had seized upon one of the bullocks! A shot struck him, and I pulled with all the energy of desperation to the triggers of my double barrel, in perfect agony at its singular obstinacy in refusing to go off, a circumstance which was afterwards accounted for in its not being cocked. Fortunately, however, the wound he had received, the full stretch of so many voices joined in such tremendous yells, with a huge flame, which suddenly shot up from the embers of a large fire, originally kindled by the servants to defend themselves from the cold of the night, all united so completely to startle the monster, that he let go his hold, and to our great relief scampered off, apparently as much frightened as ourselves.

A few days more, occupied entirely with our field sports, and marked with no further incident deserving of any particular notice, terminated our excursion, and found us again with our respective regiments.

## THE BHEEL.

AN INCIDENT OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

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IN the month of June, 1826, a young officer of the regiment I belonged to was murdered under circumstances of peculiar atrocity, at the village of Nawur, in the northern part of the Deccan, only eight miles distant from camp. An event so unusual,—for a circumstance of the kind had not occurred within the last five or six years, and the country was at peace,—excited the highest degree of astonishment and horror ; and never shall I forget the dreadful appearance the body of the unfortunate young man presented when it was brought in. The neck and back of the head were laid open by a fearful gash ; the blade-bone was bare, and that of the right elbow almost cut in two ; there were several other cuts also upon the back and arms. He was still living when he arrived, borne on a litter by some country people, but expired shortly

afterwards, without being able to give one word explanatory of the dreadful event.

A party of mat-makers, consisting of five men and two women, whose small tents were pitched only twelve or fourteen yards from where the murder took place, were arrested on suspicion and brought in for trial.

A court-martial assembled, and proceeded to investigate the affair, the members of which sat for some days, but were unable to obtain any clue to unravel the mystery. A number of suspicious circumstances tended greatly to criminate the accused persons, but others again intervened to render it more than doubtful that they were the murderers; their peaceful habits, the general timidity of all persons of this description, the absence of a weapon of any kind, save a small crooked knife used for the purposes of cutting bamboos for their mats, were all urged in their favour. But, on the other hand, blood was found on their clothes in more places than one, even also on one of their knives, and not a single human being except themselves had been seen near the place throughout the whole day. But what told against them more than anything else, was the deposition of the surgeon of the regiment who examined the body, a gentleman of the highest judgment and ex-



perience, who stated, that although in his opinion the blow on the head, with the greater part of the others, were inflicted by some sharp instrument similar to a sabre or cutlass, and as certainly dealt by no inexperienced hand, still he was convinced that the gash on the arm was caused by one of the knives, or by one similar to those found in possession of the accused.

He had, in presence of another officer, one of the members of the court, applied one to the wound, and found it to correspond in every respect; a part of the arm was jagged and bruised, partaking more of the nature of a violent dent than a cut; and this fitted the lower part of the knife exactly, it being merely a piece of iron, and never sharpened.

The only evidence of any importance in addition to this was that of the deceased officer's servant, which went to involve the affair in still greater mystery. He deposed that his master had the evening previous sent off his baggage and attendants to the next stage, retaining only a small sleeping tent and camp bedstead, with one servant, himself intending to follow in the morning. About three o'clock he was aroused by a volley of stones being thrown apparently at the tent. He listened, but heard nothing, and his master was still fast

asleep. He had again composed himself to rest, when he was aroused by a loud cry. On starting up he beheld the tent filled with armed men, and his master covered with blood lying on his bed; he shouted for help; the wounded man made an attempt to reach the door, but fell quite exhausted. What further occurred he could not remember, as he himself was at that instant knocked down and wounded; and when he recovered his senses, he found his master surrounded by the village people, with the mat-makers in their custody.

When asked if he could identify any of them, he closely examined the countenances of all, and at length declared he could not. This rendered it more difficult than ever to sift the affair, since whatever actuated the murderers to the deed, it was very evident plunder was not their object.

When called upon for their defence, the prisoners protested their entire innocence of what they were charged with; that they saw the tent surrounded with armed men, but were too much frightened even to move from where they were; that the blood on their clothes, as well as on the knife, proceeded from a sheep they had killed the previous evening; and, finally, they appealed to the Court to ask what motive could have induced them to commit such a crime? After long deliberation,

a verdict of "*Not Guilty!*" was returned, which excited a great degree of dissatisfaction at the time, and the Commander-in-Chief, having severely animadverted upon the conduct of the members, as not having discharged their duty, dissolved the Court.

Proclamations were issued, and large rewards offered for the discovery of the murderers, but in vain. Months rolled on; by degrees the circumstance which caused such a sensation at first, like all events in a military life, became less talked of, and at length almost forgotten.

Before resuming my narrative, it will not perhaps appear misplaced to offer a few observations on circumstantial evidence. A learned judge, who has been esteemed one of our ablest lawyers, previous to his elevation to the bench once declared, that where any doubt existed, he preferred entering into and sifting its minutiae, valuing it in its bearings upon a case much more than testimony of a more direct character; and I myself have heard two or three military men, filling the office of Judge Advocate General, persons of no ordinary talent, declare the same. Surely this is erroneous, or, at least, ought to be observed with considerable reservation. I may be wrong, not being conversant with law theories; but when I reflect upon

the many innocent persons consigned to an unjust sentence, convicted solely upon circumstantial evidence, I cannot refrain from a wish that, should these pages ever be perused by one who at some future period may be called upon to serve on a jury, or sit as member of a court-martial, he may well deliberate in his own mind before he gives a verdict that may consign to an irrevocable doom an innocent person, and to remember the saying of that inestimable man who declared,—“If there is a doubt, let the prisoner benefit by it; for better is it that a hundred guilty beings should escape, than one innocent person should suffer.”

The mountains and thick impervious jungles of Kandeish were at this time chiefly inhabited by Bheels, a wild, savage, ferocious race of robbers. Formerly they used to issue from their fastnesses in considerable numbers, spreading terror and devastation wherever they came; but of late years, by the attempts of the Bombay Government to civilize them, aided by several strong examples made of the ringleaders, their depredations are seldom heard of. Many have been enlisted in the Bheel corps which have been raised; several have turned husbandmen; and numbers have left their old haunts and habits, and, dispersing themselves

in the cities and towns of the various provinces adjacent, have become peaceful inhabitants of the places where they have settled.

A few small gangs, however, still issue from their hiding places, (to which none can follow, as the pestilential air of the jungles renders it almost certain death to any but a Bheel to pass a night in them,) laying the adjoining country, both Nizam's and British, under contribution; these are, however, becoming more rare, from the vigilance of the irregular horse, whose sabres generally make short work among the depredators, whenever they fall in with them.

To partake of the annual feast held by his tribe, a Bheel left the city of Aurungabad, where he had resided for several years, and proceeded to a small village about fifteen miles distant, the place appointed for the rendezvous. During the day he remarked a handsomely wrought ivory-handled clasp knife of English manufacture in possession of one of the party; and, somewhat surprised at the circumstance, he questioned him as to where he had obtained it.

"Oh!" replied the other, carelessly, either thrown off his guard by the suddenness of the question, or in the supposition that he was addressing a friend from whom no danger was to be

apprehended, "I was one of those who assisted at the murder of the British officer at Nawur two years ago, and found this in the tent."

"Is that all?" said the other with indifference, and the subject dropped.

That very night he posted back with all speed to the city, and demanding an interview with the British officer commanding the Nizam's force stationed there, laid before him what he had heard. No time was to be lost; a party of the horse, taking the Bheel with them as a guide, rode off, and reached the village as morning dawned; the man was pointed out, seized, tied on a horse with saddle-girths, and brought in. For some time he was sullen and obstinate, asserting that the charge against him was a fabrication on the part of his accuser to ruin him; but threatened with death on the one hand, and a handsome reward and free pardon for the share he had taken in the transaction, if he divulged all he knew, on the other, he at length made the following confession.

Formerly he belonged to a gang headed by a Bheel, who for many years had undergone a rigorous confinement by order of the viceroy of Aurungabad, in that city. This he imputed to Mr. Canning, the then Resident British Commissioner; and, as his punishment had been an unjust

one, he vowed to be revenged. Two years ago the greater part of the gang, led by this man, had proceeded to the village of Nawur for the purpose of plundering some merchants, who were proceeding with a large quantity of grain to the city of Hyderabad. On their arrival, late at night, they discovered that it had been lodged inside the village,\* consequently their intention to plunder it was rendered abortive. They were returning from the place when they saw a light at a small distance, on moving towards which they found it proceeded from a small open tent, in which a British officer was lying asleep. The leader was some paces in advance of the rest, when several of the gang called out to him to keep back, as there was nothing to be plundered. He still, however, went forward, they following, till he reached the door of the tent, when turning round, and merely saying, "All Europeans are alike; I have suffered from one, and now will have my revenge," he advanced towards the bed of the uncon-

\* All villages in the Deccan, in fact almost throughout all India north of the Kistna, are surrounded with a mud wall, having a tower at each angle, forming, during the troublesome period that preceded the British Empire in the East, a tolerable security against petty freebooters and predatory horse, numerous bands of which had spread themselves over, and devastated the whole country.

scious sleeper. In the next instant his sabre flew from the scabbard, and he aimed a violent blow at the unfortunate youth, intending to sever his head from his body: it encountered, however, the back of the skull,—the officer started up,—a second blow was more fatal, and he sunk down again. The whole of them now fell upon him, but he struggled still, and at length succeeded in reaching the door of the tent, when one of them felled him to the earth with the blow of a knife which he had picked up, belonging to a party of mat-makers who were close by. They now thought him dead, and fled hastily from the spot.

Scarcely was the deed perpetrated ere the murderer became terror-struck at what he had done; not remorse, but the dread of its being discovered seized him, while his feelings were aggravated by the reproaches of his followers, who now accused him of being the cause of destruction to the whole body. He fled, and for some time his fate was unknown to them; but it was at last discovered that, terrified at the large rewards held out for the discovery of the murderer, he had escaped to a remote part of the country, and building himself a hut on a high and steep hill, which commanded a full and extensive view for miles round, in this spot, which he never quitted unless to procure a



few roots and a small quantity of grain for his subsistence, he had ever since continued to drag on a miserable existence.

Here finished the narrative. After some consideration, a party of the horse, taking both Bheels with them, were despatched to the place, with strict injunctions to take him, if possible, alive. From what had been said, it was easy to perceive that the task of apprehending him would be very difficult, if not altogether impossible, should he take the alarm. It was resolved, therefore, that the party should proceed to the foot of the hill by night, the horsemen staying in a small but thick clump of trees situated at the bottom, there to wait till the morning, when the two guides should proceed up to his dwelling, and engaging him in conversation, watch the favourable moment, and call out to them to ride up and seize him.

Daylight dawned, and the miserable inmate issuing from his hut, gazed keenly and anxiously everywhere round him. His form was wasted; and however athletic and active it might formerly have been, was now worn to an absolute skeleton. As he threw his furtive glances around, he saw the figures of two persons approaching from the trees at the base of the hill. Hastily casting himself on the ground, he watched their motions with a lynxean

eye; they approached, and he could perceive they were unarmed, consequently did not come apparently as foes. Still a feeling of terror shook him, and he was turning to fly, when they called out to him: somewhat reassured, he awaited their arrival.

"Is it you?" he exclaimed as they approached. "Why do I feel troubled at your presence—are *you* come to betray me?"

They answered him soothingly, and produced some provisions, upon which the unhappy object seized with the utmost avidity.

"My days are then not yet closed," he continued, whilst the perpetual wandering of his eye showed the unsettled state of his mind, "though too well am I assured it will one day be discovered; for what is it makes me regard even you with so much dread?—Ah! they have come at last."

He caught the flash from the carbine of one of the horsemen, on the barrel of which the sun, which had now risen, reflected. "Betrayed, betrayed!" he shouted, and rushed down the hill. Calling to the soldiers, and pointing out the way he had taken, the Bheels darted after him. The horsemen galloped round the foot of the hill, riding at and over everything; the progress of the miserable fugitive was soon arrested, and one of

them, as he came up, felled him to the earth with the butt of his lance.

He was tried the very evening he arrived, and the next morning led out to meet the doom awarded him. Now that the worst had happened he seemed perfectly indifferent to his fate. "I have had my revenge," he said, "in taking the life of one of your Sirdars, and now mine is required in return—blood for blood. Be it so; it is valueless, and is nothing in my estimation compared to the one I have taken."

He was conducted to a gibbet erected on a hill overlooking the camp and its vicinity; and in a few minutes after ceased to breathe, the body being left suspended as a warning to others.

## HARCOURT.

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[For the outline of the following singular and eventful history I am indebted to a brother officer, whose name has attained the highest degree of reputation for classic and antiquarian research, not only in his own country, but throughout the whole of Europe. It is to be regretted, perhaps, that no trace has been left, or at least can be discovered, of incidents that would have formed a complete chain for the connexion of the entire narrative, though it is to be hoped that sufficient has been given in the following pages to enable the reader to form a tolerably correct estimate of the course of the career it is intended to portray, as well as to create in his mind that degree of interest which, in the extraordinary occurrences to which it relates, will repay him in its perusal.]  
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### PART THE FIRST.

ONE hot, sultry, oppressive day in the month of August, 1793, before any stir had announced the early rising of the motley and noisy population of the Rock, and almost immediately after the gates of the Fortress had been opened, two gentlemen sallied out from the lines of Gibraltar, and proceeded in the direction of the neutral ground.

The advanced sentry, as they passed him, glanced at them with a slight degree of surprise. That

both were military officers, although attired in plain clothes, was manifestly evident, not only from their general appearance, but from the large military cloak, which, notwithstanding the intolerable heat of the weather, was thrown around one of them. The other, the taller and younger of the two, was attired in a suit of deep black, which certainly appeared as ill adapted for the close and heated atmosphere of the morning as the costume of his companion.

They passed onward; and whether it was they mistook the movement of the sentinel, as he half turned towards them in his measured tread on their approach, it seemed as if they involuntarily increased their pace as they passed him.

A profound silence was maintained between the two as they continued their walk, which remained unbroken till they reached a spot at some distance from the Lines, where the ground was somewhat of an undulating nature, and partially screened them from observation.

Arrived here, the elder of the officers dropped the mantle from his shoulders, and then discovered that he carried a pistol-case under his arm, for the concealment of which the cloak had in all probability been assumed.

“ We have acted up to your adversary’s sug-

gestion," he said, looking at his watch, and then addressing his companion, "and it will be at least twenty minutes before we can expect their appearance; let me therefore take advantage of the time to ask you if there is any other service that I can render you relative to this ugly affair."

"Were it possible to add to the obligations you have already conferred upon me, Captain Osborne," replied the other, in a voice somewhat faltering with emotion, "in the kindness you have displayed towards an almost perfect stranger, believe me, I should not hesitate to offer you the opportunity of doing so; but there is nothing—absolutely nothing; for I may almost say I am the last of my family, conscious as I am of possessing no near relative to whom my fate, whatever it may be, would be deemed worthy of a passing thought or observation."

"As to any little service I have rendered you, my dear Harcourt," returned the other, "do not let any such reminiscences disturb you, as under similar circumstances I should have stepped forward to assist any fine fellow struggling against an overbearing bully, exercising upon those destitute the means of resistance the power which authority has unfortunately given him."

"But the risk you entail upon yourself!" said

Harcourt; "the loss of your commission may be the consequence of your friendly kindness towards myself."

"The loss of my commission," replied Captain Osborne, "would indeed prove somewhat disastrous to an idle dog like myself, who at least is devotedly attached to the profession he has chosen; in other respects it would be a mere bagatelle, as I am not even dependant upon the paternal acres to which, sooner or later, I must succeed for an inheritance. But let this business terminate how it will, I do not think they can in any way catch hold of me: from my not belonging to the same regiment as Colonel Mortlake and yourself, no infringement of military discipline can be brought against me relative to the charge of violence against my superior officer; and should you wing him, which I sincerely hope you will, and that pretty sharply too, old Beppo's *Speronare* is all ready to convey you out of reach of the first outburst of martinet indignation; when I trust that a clear and honest representation of your case in the highest quarter,—of the insults you were exposed to, the forbearance you displayed, and lastly, that you were driven to your present mode of redress by the taunts of your adversary himself,—will enable you, after a sharp reprimand *pro formâ*, to rejoin your regiment, from

which I would advise your exchanging with all convenient speed, and towards effecting which my people will render you every assistance;—and their influence is at least not inferior to that of your domineering Commander. By the way, you may have heard, perhaps, he is a sure and deadly hand at the weapon; and as his persevering enmity in dragging you out fully expresses what his intentions are, I trust *you* are not wholly without some experience in the use of it.”

“I have never had occasion to try,” returned Harcourt, with a faint smile, “and under any circumstances should have had a repugnance to do so; you may therefore readily conceive, under those at present existing, what my situation must be, exposed as I am on the one side to losing my life in a contest in which neither honour nor distinction is to be acquired; on the other, to poverty and ruin. It almost induces me to risk the certain chance of the first, as immeasurably the lesser evil of the two.”

“The lesser evil to which you allude,” said Osborne, drily, “is one that at all events may hereafter be alleviated, if not altogether removed, while the first admits of no such distinction. But how in Heaven’s name did the affair of last night originate? I was late at the Señora Dolores’



*tertulia* myself, and though I witnessed what subsequently occurred, and offered you my assistance when I saw that others were unable, or unwilling to come forward, I am ignorant as to how the business first of all originated, beyond what you have mentioned, that your attentions to the fair Doña Isidora seem to have excited him in the highest degree; for it is absurd to suppose that the mere accidentally jostling him in the anteroom, on your taking your departure, could either account for Colonel Mortlake's outrageous violence, or his eventually more subdued but vindictive malevolence. You cannot but be ignorant that he is considered a devoted admirer of the lovely Señorita."

"In as far as regards the general rumours of the garrison," replied Harcourt, "or casual conversation at the mess, I have certainly heard such observations made, but have never yet been given to understand that they implied anything of a serious nature; besides, if they had, the few minutes' conversation I had with the young lady was of the most common-place description—was heard by all around—and may be said to have been almost equally addressed to her mother, the Señora Dolores, who, at least, it is said, would have no objection to receiving Colonel Mortlake as a son-in-law."

"A sentiment which is by no means participated in by her daughter," said Osborne, laughing; "you are not aware, then, that twice your respected Commander has offered himself and fortune to the fair Spaniard's acceptance, and twice has his flattering offer been declined, with an intimation on the part of the cruel donzella,—feelingly, but firmly expressed,—that no more in future should be attempted. Her last rejection of him took place only yesterday morning; and the disappointed suitor was heard to declare, that whoever was his rival, he should not enjoy his triumph long."

"His rival!" replied Harcourt in astonishment; "why my acquaintance with the Señora is of the most recent and limited nature; and of the whole regiment, I was the very last on whom he should have fixed such a suspicion."

"Jealousy," returned Osborne, "is proverbially sharp-sighted, though the keenness of its vision, when influenced by passion, is sometimes misdirected; and Mortlake's imagination on this occasion may not so much have been actuated by your own bearing as that of the Señora. That she experienced pleasure in your attentions, however ordinary and common-place they may have been, I can easily conceive; and her eyes may perhaps have expressed this in a manner that her rejected

innamorato as quickly perceived; a Spanish woman's eyes, at least, are ever the windows of the soul, whatever truth there may be in the proverb which ascribes this peculiarity to the whole of the sex. She may also have been influenced by another feeling, the consequences of which she could not foresee, and which may have induced her to take this method of piquing her suitor's pride, and thus inducing him to desist from a pursuit, which becomes an absolute annoyance to its object when she cannot reciprocate the feeling in which it originates. But did Mortlake make no observation to you at the time?"

"None whatever," replied Harcourt; "I had risen to hand the Señora a glass of lemonade, when I caught his glance fixed upon me with an expression I never shall forget, in the intense and deadly hate it conveyed. It astonished and confused me at the moment, not knowing to what to attribute such an occurrence; and almost immediately afterwards, fearful of having unintentionally given offence, I went up to him for the purpose of apologising for having done so. He however evaded giving me the opportunity I sought, and as he continued doing so in the most marked and almost offensive manner, I at length desisted. The rest you yourself witnessed in the anteroom

previous to our departure, on taking leave for the evening. I had stretched forth my hand to reach my foraging cap, when, in doing so, I accidentally touched Colonel Mortlake by the arm. He turned upon me like a tiger, with the exclamation of 'D——n you, Sir, what do you mean?' I drew back, and apologised, mentioning that my jostling him was purely accidental, when he followed up his first observation," continued the youth, "his countenance becoming alternately pale and crimson with indignation, by the opprobrious epithets you heard, which he tauntingly concluded by telling me, if such terms were offensive to my delicate ear, I well knew where to look for redress, if I dared; as whatever disparity of rank existed between us, he was perfectly willing to forget, and equally so to afford me any satisfaction I thought proper to demand. As all present appeared anxious to hurry from a scene which had produced so painful an impression upon every one assembled, I approached a brother officer, and solicited his assistance in making the requisite arrangements for the meeting which lay before me. My request was received with such evident and unwilling uneasiness, that, without waiting for a reply, I turned to a second, and had commenced proffering it to him, when he at once stopped me by candidly

throwing himself upon my generosity, and begging that I would not urge his becoming a party to an affair which brought him into immediate collision with his commanding officer, the consequences of which might be productive to him of irreparable injury, if not worse. It was then you so generously stepped forward, having been an ear-witness of what had passed, and voluntarily tendered your good offices in fulfilling, what the officers of my own regiment," he continued, with some degree of bitterness, "seemed so anxious to avoid."

"You must not be too hard upon them," said Osborne; "their situation was a difficult one; believe me, it was not merely self-interest that influenced their decision. Had it been a commonplace injury they were called upon to sustain, or a mere question of self-sacrifice, I feel assured that neither one nor the other would for a moment have prevented either of your brother officers from acting promptly in your behalf; but the question becomes a grave one, when it entails the risk of making an enemy for life of a person who possesses the dangerous power of being able to make or mar you; a power, *entre nous soit dit*, which Mortlake has the reputation of stretching to its very utmost extent, in the furtherance of his interests, or what is worse, the gratification of his malevolent passions.

Have you ever," he continued, after a moment's thought, "been previously brought in contact with him, or is this incident the only business that has occurred between you?"

"Till this moment, neither on duty or otherwise, has a word of ill-feeling ever passed between us, that I have any recollection of," replied Harcourt.

"You must have stung him deeply, then," rejoined Osborne, "or otherwise he would have had recourse to the securer mode of retaliation. Rumour asserts he has so often indulged in, and, to the disgrace of our service be it said, with success; for last night, on going to him, in the hope that some explanation might be afforded in regard to what seemed to have originated in some incomprehensible misunderstanding,—confound the fellow! if he did not appear well inclined to turn upon me, in return for my pacific overtures; and, truth to say, I was more than half disposed to indulge him. We however contrived to separate without coming to any actual quarrel; and I proceeded in search of his old Major, to whom he referred me, who appeared as reluctant as a person well could be to undertake the duty assigned him, but which, poor fellow, he dared not disobey. I am well satisfied, therefore, that his intentions towards you are *à l'outrance*, and it will be no fault on his part

if they are not fulfilled to the most fatal extent. What his object is in so doing, beyond yielding to a blind impulse of jealous phrensy, it is difficult to determine ; unless, indeed, he deems, either that such a proceeding will improve his position with *la belle Espagnole*, or hopes, by these means, to deter others from approaching her,—but here they are.”

Two other gentlemen now approached the spot where they stood, who, from the direction in which they came, had evidently made a circuit from the Lines to avoid observation. The one was an elderly, mild-looking, grey-haired man, with an appearance at once both prepossessing and intelligent, and forming altogether a marked and striking contrast to his companion.

The latter was a fine, tall, soldier-like, and powerfully built man, of about two or three and thirty years of age, whose countenance was handsome, and who had that unmistakeable look about him, expressive of his having mingled in the first circles of society ; but there was a sinister, sullen glance in his dark, gleaming eyes, overshadowed with thick, bushy eyebrows, that imparted to his features an unpleasing, and at times a repulsive character, from which the spectator instinctively shrank ; the *tout ensemble* indeed being strongly

expressive of a coarse, overbearing, even brutal nature, conjoined with the most violent and malignant passions, unchecked and uncontrolled by any feeling having the remotest approach to either reason or principle.

A cold, stern salutation passed between the parties, on the arrival of the new comers, after which Captain Osborne, addressing Major Bolton, the second of Colonel Mortlake, took him for a few minutes aside. Their conversation apparently related to the possibility of even then preventing a hostile meeting, as, though unheard by the two principals, it was terminated by the Major's saying,—“Well, well, I may as well try, at all events, and will mention what you have stated.”

He accordingly approached his friend, whom he appeared to address with much earnestness, and who at first listened to his observations in lowering, gloomy silence—then broke out into abrupt interruptions—and finally concluded their conference by saying, in a loud, imperious voice, so as to be heard by all present,—“I came out, Sir, for other purposes than to listen either to your representations or those of others; and have therefore to request you will at once proceed to make the requisite arrangements for what brought me here.”



Major Bolton bit his lip, but said nothing in reply, as he turned towards Osborne with a glance which seemed to intimate, "I told you how it would be." The seconds now rapidly but quietly proceeded with their business, satisfied that all efforts on their part to produce a reconciliation were out of the question. The pistols were loaded, and on lots being drawn as to who was to measure the ground, it fell to Captain Osborne; who had commenced his task, when Colonel Mortlake called out with a sneer, "You are evidently determined, Sir, that as long an interval as possible shall be placed between us."

The officer in question continued the business on which he was engaged, without paying any immediate attention to the taunt, beyond if possible lengthening the strides with which he had commenced it; but on its conclusion, he walked up to the speaker, and touching his hat said,—“Colonel Mortlake, I am occupied in a duty of which I am the best judge, and upon which common decency, I will not say gentlemanly courtesy, should have required that *you*, at all events, should have foreborne any comment; but I give you now most explicitly to understand,—and I call upon you, Major Bolton, to bear testimony to what I say,—that in the event of your uttering one single

observation more, I shall instantly withdraw my friend from the ground, and publicly proclaim to the whole world my reasons for so doing."

Colonel Mortlake glared upon the speaker for a moment, and it seemed as if his passion was about to burst forth beyond all possibility of control. He checked himself however by a strong effort, though the exertion seemed to convulse his whole frame in doing so.

Without paying any further regard to him, Captain Osborne turned upon his heel, and rejoining the Major, each immediately led his principal to their appointed places. The weapons were placed in their hands ready cocked, it being arranged that on the word "Ready!" they were to bring them to the level of the present, and on the subsequent word "Fire!" both triggers were to be drawn on the instant.

The adversaries now stood facing each other; and a greater contrast than that they respectively presented it would be difficult to imagine. Colonel Mortlake stood with his side towards his antagonist, his pistol grasped firmly in his hand, his body slightly inclined forward, and his whole bearing exhibiting the practised duellist; while the malevolent and vindictive passion which distorted his features, was in no slight degree intermingled

with a covert expression of fiendish exultation. Harcourt stood with his full front directed towards him, his weapon held negligently, as if scarcely conscious of its touch : his countenance was pale, but all vestige of agitation had passed away, and he stood forth the image of quiet, firm resolution, the last whispered observation of his friend Osborne being almost unheeded, as he said, "No haste—bring your weapon up gently, with its muzzle slightly depressed, and fire low."

There was a dead silence of a few seconds, which was broken by the clear, sonorous voice of the Major, as he gave the first signal, "Ready!" it was almost immediately followed by its fatal sequence, the utterance of which seemed scarcely audible, so closely was it followed by the simultaneous report of both pistols, which was of so instantaneous a nature, that it would have led an uninterested hearer to suppose but one explosion had taken place.

Harcourt staggered a few steps, but quickly recovered himself, and picked up his hat which had fallen. As he did so, he at once perceived the deadly accuracy of his antagonist's shot, which must have absolutely passed through his hair, slightly grazing the skin, as a momentary faintness seemed to follow the shock, though it almost im-

mediately passed away! Colonel Mortlake stood firm as a rock, his eyes glaring with intense eagerness upon his adversary. Suddenly, as he saw that Harcourt remained uninjured, a ghastly and livid paleness overspread his features, and merely uttering the words, "D—n,—I have missed the fellow, by God!" he seemed gradually to lean forward, and then fell heavily upon his face!

All rushed towards him, and while his second raised his head from the ground, Captain Osborne endeavoured to ascertain where the ball had struck him. The place was soon evident, being a little below the right breast towards the side: they tore open his clothes, and a single glance sufficed to show its fatal character.—Bubble, bubble, oozed a few dark, deep-coloured drops, and then stopped; the shot had passed through his heart! As they gazed upon him, a slight foam speckled with blood seemed to issue from his lips, the eyes half unclosed, and then in their glassy stare became fixed for ever!

Harcourt stood gazing in a state of stupefaction upon the scene before him. However goaded, provoked, and driven to the perpetration of the act he had committed, it seemed at the moment as if the sting created by the homicide must hereafter adhere to him, and by its omnipresence prove in

itself the fittest example of retributive justice. He was, however, roused from his gloomy reverie, by the voice of Osborne exclaiming, "Fly, Harcourt,—quick, quick; you have not a moment to lose. The *Speronare* lies close in shore, and you will find Beppo on the look-out; come, come! rouse yourself before it is too late; should the firing have been heard by the picquet, they will be down on the instant."

Scarcely conscious of what he was doing, though a sense of the danger he incurred by delay flashed across his mind, the unfortunate survivor of the late fatal event at length nerved himself for exertion; and wringing his friend's hand, and casting once more a wild glance of remorse upon the body of his late adversary, he rushed with all speed from the spot,—an example which was quickly afterwards followed by the seconds.

It was not till some hours afterwards that rumours of what had occurred became prevalent throughout the Fortress, mingled with audibly expressed feelings of satisfaction at the escape of the survivor, and unmixed with the remotest shadow of regret for the fate of the deceased. He belonged to a class of commanders, of whom the examples are fortunately now rare, both in the army and navy; the voice of public opinion being

at the present period somewhat too powerful for that abuse of authority as it existed in former years, though occasionally the adventitious possession of title, connexion, or overwhelming influence, will cause the nomination to high office or command—to the exclusion of the most acknowledged merit and ability, as well as the most loyal, devoted, and successful service—of persons wholly unfitted for either; whose very education even would not have advanced them from the ranks, had they been born to a humbler situation in life, but who are thus invested with the most absolute control over thousands,—perhaps millions;—who have hunted to destruction and ruin, with impunity, those who, without provocation, have become the objects of their envy and hatred; and whose whole system of government would appear to have consisted in the depreciation of others superior to themselves, and in heaping every insult that a coarse and brutal nature could suggest, upon those destitute of the means of resistance.

## PART THE SECOND.



### CHAPTER I.

THERE are but few beings living, perhaps, of the present generation in England, who can recal to mind the terrible events that occurred during the nights of the 17th and 18th December, 1793, in the south of Europe. If they are few who in any way remember them from the Gazettes and published records of the day, still more limited, alas! is the number of those who either personally witnessed, or were participants in them.

The night of the 17th was one of those bright starlight periods, not often found at this time of the year, even along the shores of the Mediterranean, the deep blue firmament of which, shining with innumerable stars, seemed more characteristic of a Neapolitan or Palermitan clime, than that of Toulon, over which devoted and unhappy city it at this moment hung in all its glowing beauty.

Clustered together in small groups, the unfortunate inhabitants, men, women, and even children, gazed upon each other, or spoke in suppressed whispers, their features wearing an agonized expression of dismay and terror. They were now fully alive to the horrors of their situation; and even the hearts of the boldest, who had fought side by side with their Allies, in all the energy of desperation, in defence of their hearths and families, now experienced that sickness of feeling, expressive of all the phrensy of despair, when even hoping against hope has utterly passed away! One only chance remained to them—that of hopeless, perpetual exile—should their Allies have sufficient time to cover their retreat from the infuriated and savage Republicans.

From the first moment that the army of Dugommier had entered upon the siege, and the citizens had beheld themselves disappointed in their expected aid from the European powers, it was manifestly evident how the struggle *must* terminate; and with the recently enacted hideous scenes of Lyons before them, in all their revolting atrocities, they too truly felt what would be their own fate on the city being surrendered to the forces of the Convention.

Their chief reliance had been upon the English;



but with the exception of the seamen and marines landed from the fleet under Sir Samuel Hood, and a small body of troops drawn from the garrison of Gibraltar—the whole not exceeding five thousand men—their hopes had been frustrated: and while their expectations had not been disappointed in regard to the stubborn and obstinate bravery of their protectors, in vain they looked for further reinforcements; the more anxiously prayed for when it became evident that the brunt of the whole service was left to be borne by them alone: the Spaniards and others of the Allied forces, having by their misconduct not only endangered the safety of the town, but left the British contingent on one occasion to the risk of almost certain destruction.

It was owing to this that every effort on the part of Dugommier had latterly been directed towards the fortifications occupied by the English, in the assured conviction that if he could succeed in overpowering them, the reduction of the city, notwithstanding its strong defences, would be comparatively easy; as the fleet would be completely commanded,—the guns from the British position raking the harbour throughout. The post of the English was the fort called Aiguillette, and the works that had hastily been thrown up connected

with it, situated on the slip of land leading to the city. These within the last few days had almost exclusively occupied the besieger's batteries, particularly during the entire day of the 18th, when from daylight till late in the evening the fire had been so persevering and incessant, that scarcely any interval had been left even for the guns to cool.

The consequence of this terrible cannonade was, that not only were several practicable breaches effected, but the whole line of fortifications became almost an absolute heap of ruins. The position, however, in itself was naturally strong; and while the British commanders felt an innate conviction that what had occurred was only the prelude to a desperate effort on the part of the assailants to storm the works, a confidence in the valour of their troops, and the expectation that during the night, by unceasing efforts, they might be able to raise some fresh barriers to the progress of the besiegers, led to the hope that they would be enabled to maintain themselves;—the more particularly since it was almost an absolute impossibility for the enemy to endeavour to turn the position, exposed as they would be to a raking and enfilading fire from almost every gun their adversaries could command, that would apparently exterminate any

body of troops, however numerous and determined, hazarding the attempt.

The British troops occupied the centre, which formed the most salient part of the works. With them were associated a great many of the townspeople, animated with all the recklessness of despair, and—with the hideous souvenirs of Nantes and Lyons present to their imaginations—resolute to stand to the last by the side of their Allies, in defence of their homes and families. To the rear, the lines had been entrusted to those troops whose steadiness previous affairs had exhibited as somewhat questionable; but who, it was conjectured, on the present occasion would have but little chance of any close conflict, the more particularly if they but served their guns with any degree of coolness and precision.

Towards midnight a comparative stillness had reigned throughout both the camp of the besiegers, as well as the town, and lines of the Allies. Shortly afterwards, however, a low murmuring sound arose in the former, which, as time advanced, gradually increased in strength, and went rolling, rolling onward, in the course of which period the whole forces of the besieged gathered in silent determination to their respective posts. This was succeeded by a pause of a few moments

of intense stillness, and then was followed by the quick, heavy tramp of a body of disciplined men, evidently that of a dense and massive column on its march. Onward, onward they came ; and as the thunder of their batteries opened to cover their advance, the loud shouts of the advancing assailants seemed to rise above it.

Not a sound was heard in reply from the British lines. On this, as on many other subsequent occasions, was witnessed that "*silence affreux*," so repeatedly spoken of by their adversaries as the forerunner of some stern, dogged, and determined resolution, most certainly fully borne out on the present occasion. The attacking columns had now ranged up to within the distance when their skirmishers could commence a sharp, scattering fire. As if this had been the signal the besieged had alone waited for, the first shots had scarcely rattled along the line, covering the advance of the two heavy columns advancing in échelon, when all at once an instantaneous crash of grape, round, canister, and musketry together, from the English works, poured into the leading mass, tearing it through and through, and seeming almost to lift it from the ground as it sent it staggering into its support, in the ranks of which it became intermingled, throwing them into hopeless and inextricable confusion.

Sharp, swift, and with energetic fierceness, the death-dealing shower continued to pour from the British artillery upon the inert and heavy mass before them, till, unable to bear up against, or rally under its murderous effect, in spite of the strenuous and gallant exertions of their officers, they fairly broke and fled.

Dugommier galloped up, though evidently suffering intense pain from the effects of a severe concussion, which he had received a few days previous. He dashed at once into the midst of his flying troops, and by voice and example, assisted by his staff, endeavoured to restore some degree of order. His voice was calm and collected: never had he displayed greater *sang-froid* than in this trying moment, though the deadly pallor of his countenance was not altogether, perhaps, caused by physical suffering,—as dark visions of the guillotine rose before his agitated mind; and once, it was afterwards asserted, he was heard to mutter, “*Je suis un homme perdu!*”

But however severely checked, the Republican forces were not defeated; and once in some measure withdrawn under cover, the example of their leaders quickly recovered them from their temporary panic; the frightful carnage they had witnessed among their ranks, in their recent attempts, being too

common-place an occurrence, since the commencement of the Wars of the Revolution, to be thought of, after the effect it had produced had passed away. Dugommier therefore very quickly had his troops again in hand, and reformed; and led on by himself in person, the columns a second time advanced to the attack, though with a greater degree of caution than before, their front being now covered by a cloud of skirmishers, reinforced by several light field batteries.

The *pas de charge* sounded, and with loud shouts, the assailants, as they approached the spot where their dead were lying in heaps, attempted a desperate rush onward, with the evident hope of being able to get under the range of their adversaries' guns. But again arose the roar of the British artillery, sending forth its storm of bullets; and again it came crashing and tearing into the ranks of the besiegers, which presented the appearance of a seething cauldron of human slaughter. The survivors still desperately endeavoured to struggle onward, the most frantic efforts being made to open out their front. Notwithstanding the continued slaughter occasioned by the grape and musketry of their adversaries, Dugommier had partially succeeded in this manœuvre, when a shot struck him in the side, and he fell from his horse, whilst

almost in the same instant a dense line of serried bayonets issued from the British lines, and charged with a tremendous cheer right down upon their half-formed adversaries, who at once broke and fled in every direction.

As the tide of fugitives swept onward, there seemed every chance of their guns, and the artillery-men who served them, being left to their fate, and captured by the advancing British. The bugle, however, blew the recall of the latter, who slowly retreated behind their batteries, while at the same instant a young officer, wearing the uniform of a colonel of artillery, and who was no other than the commandant of that force before the town, having ordered the guns to limber up, spurred his horse after the retreating soldiery, a portion of whom, after incessant exertions, he succeeded in rallying, thus forming a *point d'appui* for the restoration of order among the rest.

There was something in the voice and mien of the youthful commander that seemed by some irresistible impulse to attract the soldiery towards him. Whether he was the next in seniority, upon whom the command devolved by right, or otherwise, he at once assumed it, and again withdrawn from the scene of their late frightful disaster, his

orders were obeyed with a promptitude and alacrity that expressed his, at all events, possessing the confidence of the troops in the most eminent degree ; as in terms of alternate reproach and command, encouragement and menace, he exerted himself to bring the scattered ranks into something like order.

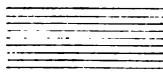
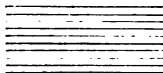
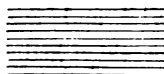
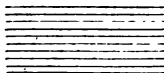
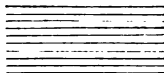
Under cover of some rising ground, this was accomplished with a rapidity that perhaps French troops alone could offer an example of ; and as strong reinforcements came pouring up, order was once more completely restored. Daylight had now dawned, and almost alone the young Commander rode towards the English position, which he proceeded to reconnoitre through his glass. Long and minute was the scrutiny, and on its conclusion, as he rejoined his men, the order was promptly issued for altogether a new formation. Hitherto the assault had been made in the dense, massive column, the style so peculiar to the French armies since the era of the revolutionary wars. This system on the present occasion was considerably modified, and in lieu of the compact body they had hitherto presented, the troops were drawn up in simple close columns of double battalions, five in number, the whole presenting that formation, now generally known in the great continental



armies as the *Tête de Cochon*,\* a mode which, usually adopted for a flank attack upon a position, is equally favourable for an overwhelming onset in front.

All stood now prepared for a third advance ; similar strong columns of reserve being formed, as reinforcements came pouring up, which had been withdrawn for this service from other parts of the besiegers' lines ; but before the word was issued, each regimental commander was addressed by the youthful chieftain in short, brief, and impressive terms, as he explained his plan of action, and pointed it out as the certain and only mode of

\* For the information of unprofessional, or even military readers, who have never possessed the opportunity of seeing troops manœuvre in large masses, (in preference to any lengthened description, which might be misconceived,) I beg to offer the following sketch, in which it is to be understood that each column is composed of one or two regiments, or battalions, and varying in strength from eight hundred to two thousand bayonets.



success. His light and emaciated, but sinewy frame, seemed to dilate with the words of energy and anticipated triumph that issued from his lips, whilst his pale, sunken, and sallow features, rendered the more striking by his long, straggling, black, raven hair, seemed to glow with the fire which gleamed from his dark stern grey eye.

He was answered with loud shouts. The crash of the drums once more sounded, in one long, prolonged roll, the *pas de charge*, and again the besieging columns rushed forward. Onward, onward they pressed, when once more burst forth that crashing storm of fire from the British batteries, pouring an absolute avalanche of death and destruction into the advancing ranks. The leading column seemed for a moment to be lifted from the earth, as the iron shower burst amid its ranks, and, for the moment it appeared as if half the regiments composing it had fallen beneath that fatal discharge, under which it staggered as if from the explosion of a mine. The column reeled, and fell back; but the space was now clear behind them, and the disorder was confined to their own ranks, for almost above the roar of the artillery, the voice of the young leader rose in loud, clear, stirring accents of "En avant! en avant!" and the remaining battalions, who, although they had also

suffered severely, had yet preserved their order, answered the cry, as they sprang forward, while the masses in reserve came pouring up from the rear.

The object of the besiegers now became manifestly evident in the new formation that had been adopted. By the sacrifice of their leading column, upwards of six thousand men had passed the flanks of the British line of fortifications, fresh troops continuing to press forward in the same direction, with the determined resolution of gaining the works that more immediately covered the harbour, and thus turning the rear of the English forces. The line of redoubts and batteries in this direction, however, in addition to being of unusual strength, had scarcely been injured by the fire of the besiegers, and under ordinary circumstances, such an attempt would have been considered as an act little short of absolute madness. But it has been truly observed, that there is a genius in audacity—the more particularly in Military Life—which often commands success, where the best contrived plans and deepest laid schemes and precautions as often invariably fail.

The present instance was a fatal corroboration of the truth of this observation. This part of the lines, as previously observed, from being considered

almost impregnable, and moreover partially removed from the more desperate scene of the contest, had been entrusted to the Spaniards, who up to the present period had continued to behave with the utmost steadiness. But they were fated to be the evil destiny of the unfortunate city. As the overwhelming masses came rushing on, they paused at a moment when all that energy and rapidity could combine was necessary to check their advance. Again that fatal panic, which had once before caused so much disaster to the allied forces, began to spread among them, though, even then, had they remained firm at their guns, the progress of the besiegers must inevitably have been arrested; but as the leading platoons of the French grenadiers came within half musket shot, they wavered, broke, deserted their pieces, and fled with the most disgraceful precipitation.

The situation of the British was now critical in the extreme. Of the five thousand they had originally numbered, upwards of a third had fallen, either killed or wounded. The first act of the young French Commander, who was himself the foremost in entering the lines of the besieged, was to turn the guns upon the remaining works which had been so resolutely defended, and were still held by the most formidable of his adversaries;

who, however, outflanked and outnumbered, still fiercely and indomitably maintained the contest. But the odds were too great. Hardly pressed in front, between eight and ten thousand of the enemy had gained their rear, whose leader, a practised artillerist, directed in person the guns of their late allies upon them with the most terrible and fatal effect.

At once arose three tremendous cheers, and then, issuing forth from their lines in swift but compact array, came the long line of red coats, their bayonets flashing in the rays of the morning sun. Steady and determined they moved onward, with every evidence of cool, unwavering resolution; cut off and surrounded, their only chance, they well knew, was to force their way through the ranks of their adversaries, overwhelming in numbers as they were, and regain the shelter of the walls of the town and cover of their fleet. Daring and reckless as the enterprise appeared, they felt that confidence in themselves which assured them of success,—a feeling that never once wavered, as in conscious strength they closed upon the dark masses of the enemy.

There was for a few minutes the stunning shock of the collision, the clash of ringing steel, the shouts, oaths, and execrations of the combatants;

and then, borne back by the impetuous force of the onset, the Republicans gave way on all sides, leaving a free passage to their retiring, but unconquered adversaries, the voice and example of their gallant leader affording no longer the rallying point for his men, he himself being overthrown in the first burst of the *mêlée*. The English accomplished their object, the heaps of their dead and dying attesting the desperate sacrifice at which it had been obtained; no less than upwards of three hundred bodies, as French writers assert, being found in one confined spot alone, piled upon each other!

It was during the occurrence of these events, that a tall, fine-looking young man, meanly clad, and whose features and appearance seemed to indicate either great mental or bodily suffering, or perhaps both, had ascended the rising ground under cover of which the French troops had debouched; and although in dangerous proximity to the balls from the British batteries, which whistled in every direction past and around him, gazed with intense and feverish eagerness upon the scene before him. As the conflict deepened this feeling seemed to increase, and as the Republican forces fell back crushed and overwhelmed from their first assault, and he beheld the line of scarlet uniforms ad-

vancing, bearing all before it, a crowd of bitter souvenirs seemed to rush over his memory.

Throughout the whole combat he scarcely moved from his position, though incurring the risk of being trampled to death, as the disordered ranks swept by, who scarcely noticed him, or if they did, were perhaps led to believe he was one of those Jacobin bands who, like birds of prey, hung upon their rear, in the scent of anticipated slaughter! And yet there was something singular about him, which under other circumstances would have led the observer to regard him with wonder and curiosity. Despite the squalor and wretchedness of his appearance, his handsome and noble features expressed a station and condition of life immeasurably above what his present exterior would seem to indicate; while his powerful, well-knit, manly figure, set in nature's finest mould, in its erect, but light and flexible bearing, gave every symptom of military life and habits.

An attentive spectator, considering what was passing around, would instantaneously have asked who or what he was, or what could have brought him there at such a moment. He might, perhaps, be one of the ferocious satellites previously alluded to, which his dress and appearance would seem to indicate; but a single glance would serve to destroy

any such supposition, and lead the beholder to raise a question as to whether he was even a Frenchman, the more particularly from his conduct and bearing, as the combat continued to rage; for he could not repress a shout of exultation, as the British cut their way through the hosts which surrounded them, though it almost immediately subsided into an expression of saddened and agonized feeling, as if he felt that that victorious shout of joy and triumph was a mere momentary excitement, in which *he* could not find any lasting participation.

As the roar of the cannon, and dropping fire of musketry lessened, in evidence of the approaching termination of the conflict, he turned from the spot on which he had stood, and as if uncertain, or careless of where he directed his footsteps, he gradually drew nearer to the scene of the combat. He was passing some long, low, straggling bushes, which lay about ten yards to his left, when he thought a faint groan smote upon his ear. He listened, and gazed around, but not immediately observing anything near him, was led to believe his imagination had deceived him, and was moving forward, when again the moaning reached him with a distinctness which could not be misunderstood.



He moved quickly to the spot, and gazing searchingly around, thought he discovered a recumbent figure lying beneath a small thicket, a little apart from the rest. To spring over the obstacle was the work of an instant, and there, with a pool of blood beside him, lay the young and gallant Commandant of Artillery, through whose skill and courage alone the army of the besiegers had been successful, and who had evidently sunk down where he lay, in an attempt to reach the rear ; his fall in the moment of triumph having been unobserved by his men, or perhaps intentionally concealed from them by himself.

He lay upon his side, with his head resting upon one arm ; the eyes were closed, and his pallid features were apparently fixed in the rigidity of death. On stooping down, however, the person who had thus providentially arrived to his succour found that his heart still beat, and therefore lost no time in ascertaining where the wound had taken effect. A cut on the arm was the first thing that attracted his attention, but this was very slight and superficial ; nor did the effect of a musket-ball, which had torn his clothes below the breast on the right side, appear to be of any consideration, as, however physically painful at the moment it may have been, from the contusion, it had scarcely

grazed the skin. On slightly turning the body, however, a low faint groan escaped the sufferer, and then was fully discovered where the principal wound lay, which consisted of a deep and dangerous bayonet-thrust in the hip, from which the blood continued to ooze out in a dark, heavy stream.

Gently laying the wounded man upon his back, his preserver proceeded to staunch the blood, and with his handkerchief to bind up the wound. Having effected this, he next proceeded to a spot where lay two or three bodies of the slain, from one of which he took a canteen, which on examination he fortunately found to be filled with wine. Hastening back with his prize, he lifted the head of the fallen Commander, which he placed upon his knees, and poured some of the liquid down his throat, the good effects of which were very quickly visible. Slowly the wounded man opened his eyes, gazed wildly around him, as if endeavouring to regain a recollection of where he was, and then said, faintly, but with bitterness, "Again foiled!"

His companion was silent, perhaps unable at the moment fully to understand the allusion. On receiving no answer, the officer, after a moment's pause, in which he evidently endeavoured to dis-

cover who or what his companion was, said, with considerable haughtiness, "Am I a prisoner?"

"No," was the reply; "the French are everywhere successful, and the English have retired within the walls of the town."

"Ha! then who or what are you? for, if I mistake not, your tongue would intimate little sympathy with the victors."

"Who, or what I am, is of little moment, but let me suggest that you remain tranquil, while I proceed in search of some means of procuring medical assistance, as well as obtaining the aid of those who will second my efforts in securing your removal; for disabled and helpless as you are," and he glanced at the officer's rich uniform, "your situation may prove a perilous one, from the murderous *canaille* prowling around."

The wounded soldier sat up, though with some difficulty, and gazed upon his companion with evident curiosity, not unmingled with a considerable degree of surprise.

"This, then, is your work," he said at length, glancing upon the bandage which the other had carefully adjusted upon his wound, "and deeply am I indebted to you for your timely succour; for though I am not so badly hurt as you would seem to believe, loss of blood alone at the moment having

struck me down, still, but for your opportune assistance, remaining unchecked, it might ultimately have proved serious, if not fatal. But give me your hand,—I feel myself so much better now, that with your aid I may be able to reach my quarters, or at least stumble upon some of my fellows, who will find means for my doing so; besides," he continued, as he bent his searching eye upon his companion, "my presence may not be wholly unnecessary for your own preservation, and thus enable me in some measure to repay the obligation I am under to you."

Carefully assisting the disabled Commandant to arise, the stranger placed him upon his feet. He staggered at first, but it soon appeared that the estimate which he had formed of the extent of the injury sustained, was tolerably correct, as, though slowly and with difficulty, yet by aid of the strong arm which supported him, he was gradually enabled to move forward.

As they proceeded towards the lines of the besiegers, in the direction which the young officer had indicated as where his quarters were situated, they came upon many objects giving painful evidence of the terrible nature of the recent struggle. The bodies of those who had straggled to the rear (many of which were already stripped) but to sink

down and die, were mingled with broken arms, dismounted guns, and the fragments of caissons and gun-carriages which lay scattered around. Occasionally too, shrieks and groans of the most agonizing nature were borne upon the air, causing the blood momentarily to recede from the heart of the bravest.

All at once arose a piercing, thrilling cry for mercy, which reached the startled ears of its auditors, the prelude to a scene the sight of which filled the hearts of both with sickening horror, as its cause became visible. Dragging a party of unhappy Royalists before them, there came into view some ten or twelve ferocious Jacobins—the very worst and most hideous of their species. In their blood-stained grasp were an aged couple, a young girl scarcely verging on the border of womanhood, two youths, apparently her brothers, and a sweet, lovely female child, hardly ten years of age. Those of the gentle sex were dragged forcibly along by the hair of their heads, while coils of rope, which had tied the hands and legs of their companions, were passed round their bodies, and used for a similar purpose. It was the cries and piteous entreaties of the former, answered by these remorseless miscreants with oaths, execrations, and shouts of “*à la guillotine, à la lanterne,*” which had reached the ears of the young Commander

and his companion, both of whom stood for the moment almost paralysed with horror.

For a single instant only, however, this feeling lasted; in the next, the former sprang forward, and with an energy that seemed almost supernatural from a being who the moment before appeared so feeble and debilitated, drove his sabre into the skull of the ruffian who had his hold upon the elder female! The villain sunk to the earth, his antagonist falling over him, the exertion having evidently been too much for his exhausted frame, and again causing a frightful hemorrhage from his reopened wound.

His situation was now one of imminent peril; for in an instant, the long knife of a second ruffian glittered in the air, and was descending upon the officer's prostrate body, when a blow from the butt of a musket arrested the stroke, and dashed out the miscreant's brains. It came from the young Commander's companion, who, catching up the weapon from the ground, where it fortunately lay within reach, now stood over him, and swung it round him with a force and dexterity, that, evidencing no slight knowledge of the art of cudgel-playing, kept his numerous antagonists at bay, encumbered as they were with their prey, to which they were loath to give any chance for escape.

The combat, however, was too unequal to last; a severe gash dealt by one of the assassins had disabled the young man's right arm, and both his companion and himself must inevitably have fallen victims to their humanity, when, fortunately, at this moment several soldiers approached, and a glance at their uniform served at once to show to what corps they belonged, as the stranger shouted out, "*An secours, au secours, soldats d'artillerie ! sauvez votre officier !*"

The appeal was promptly answered; and rushing up, a single glance seemed to express to the men the state of affairs, as mingling in the fray, they cut down without mercy the sanguinary band, except such as were enabled to save themselves by flight, and released their unfortunate victims.

Freed from their antagonists, the stranger, assisted by the soldiery who had so opportunely arrived to the rescue of their Commander as well as himself, again raised him from the ground, and was happy to find, that though weak and helpless, he still retained the command of all his faculties, while his first observation evidently expressed that nothing of what had recently passed had escaped his observation.

"You are," he exclaimed, laying his hand upon the shoulder of his preserver, as he was again busy

in adjusting the bandage of his wound,—“you are a brave and noble fellow, and to whatever circumstances may be owing your being here, rest assured I will never forget the services you have this day rendered me. But come, we have another, and a somewhat hazardous duty before us, in which *you* may prove of the most material assistance. Allons, mes enfans !” he continued, turning to his men, “we must save these wretched beings from the fangs of their executioners ; for let it not be said that the glory of the soldier acquired in the morning’s victory, has been sullied by his standing by, and witnessing such atrocities, when he had it in his power to prevent them.”

He was answered by universal acclamations ; the liberated captives, with tears of passionate excitement, invoking blessings upon the heads of their preservers, as they moved in the direction of the shore. On the road they encountered various groups of ferocious-looking beings, covered with blood, shouting the “*Ça ira*,” mingling its strains with “*Vive la guillotine*,” and other sanguinary cries. They passed on unheeded and unquestioned, it being deemed, perhaps, that the rescued victims formed merely another party being led to slaughter by the mitrallades, or the guillotine ; or if any other suspicion was entertained, the soldiery who



formed their escort were too formidable for any attempt to be made to oppose with success their humane intentions.

As they neared the shore, the Commander, in a low voice, addressed the stranger, and pointing to some boats in the distance with the English flag, said, "There is the only security for these unfortunates; be it your care to place them on board one of these. I must now leave you, but a party of these men will secure you from harm, and cover your return to the shore, if indeed,"—and he looked hard at him as he spoke,—“such is your intention.”

“I have no option,” said the other, mournfully, and glancing with pain and emotion in the direction in which the officer pointed.

“Is it, indeed, so?” replied the latter, his stern features softening, as he gazed with sympathy upon his companion; “the greater then my *devoir* to show that this morning’s work has not been lost. Serjeant Hubert,” he continued, addressing a veteran non-commissioned officer, “this brave man will finish what your gallant comrades and yourself have so nobly begun, and place these poor people on board one of the English boats; let some eight or ten of your companions remain on the shore, to see that he meets no injury on his return, and then conduct him to my quarters.”

"Très bien, mon Colonel," was the reply, as raising his hand to his cap, the gallant artilleryman intimated by the action his thorough comprehension of his orders.

"And now farewell," said the Commander, addressing his companion; "the final rescue of these unfortunates must depend upon you, as in the confusion of the moment you may pass unobserved, whereas the uniform of my men would only serve to draw upon them attention here, and expose them, in all probability, to the fire of the British squadron; use all speed, and *au reste*,—other matters when we meet again."

Jumping into the nearest boat, of which the mast was already stepped, with its sail flapping in the breeze, the stranger proceeded to unfurl it, as the soldiers carefully assisted in placing the rescued, but now almost exhausted and worn out victims in it. This was quickly accomplished, and with a slant of wind equally favourable for his return, the canvas was spread, and the vessel glided swiftly and surely over the waters of the harbour.

They were soon near enough to hail an English pinnace, the crew of which at first lay upon their oars, and apparently regarded the boat with some degree of suspicion. But a second cry to them for assistance, in their own language, caused them to

ply their oars vigorously in the direction of the fugitives, who, in a few minutes, were transferred on board their vessel. This was no sooner accomplished, than, as if seeking to avoid all further communication, the stranger seized the helm and returned swiftly to the shore, where he found on landing his new comrades awaiting him.

"We have now completed one part of our orders," said the veteran serjeant, whom his officer had addressed by the name of Hubert, "and now for the remainder."

As he spoke, he flung an artilleryman's great coat and foraging cap to the stranger, who drew back with evident inclination to reject the invitation to assume the same, which the serjeant's manner had seemed to imply.

"I'll tell you what, brother," said the soldier, quietly, but firmly, "you yourself may be indifferent to dancing the "*Ça ira*," to music à la guillotine, but we, at all events, have no wish to see our gallant young Commandant follow the example. Your only chance of safety, and perhaps his, is in implicitly doing as you are directed; otherwise, this morning's work is likely to cost dear; altogether concealed it cannot be, and Monsieur le Citoyen Carrier, is not likely to over-

look the slaughter of some half-a-dozen of his beauties, (*peste*, I wish it had been as many thousands!) if he can avenge them."

The equal prudence and good feeling of these observations were at once perceived by the stranger, who now hastily proceeded to do as he was directed, though, as he followed his companions, on his disguise being completed, he muttered to himself in evident bitterness of spirit,—“The guillotine? it would at least be as fitting a termination as any other to a life of exile, disgrace, and destitution!”

## CHAPTER II.

THE doom of the unfortunate town was sealed ; but now that several days had elapsed since its fall, the greater part of the horrors that had succeeded its first occupation by the Republican forces had passed away. This was in a great measure owing, to their honour be it said, to the exertions of the military, prompted, and secretly assisted, by their Commanders ; and though the latter had the almost certain fate of the guillotine before them, for any undue humanity they displayed towards their unhappy countrymen, the ferocity of the delegates of the Convention was materially checked by the refusal of the soldiery to fulfil their bloody mandates ; and when threats and remonstrances were addressed to Dugommier upon the subject, that General very quietly hinted the danger of their pressing matters too far, not only to themselves, who would inevitably become its first victims, but to the government itself.

The cowardly squels of the sanguinary tribunes paled before this significant allusion, which on more than one occasion addressed even to Robespierre himself, had led that wily and ferocious despot urgently to inculcate upon his satellites the necessity of extreme caution in meddling with anything that might tend to create a spirit of dissatisfaction in the army.

The capture of the batteries and fortified position upon the Aiguillette, had been instantaneously followed up by a vigorous assault on the line of outworks established upon the range of hills in the opposite quarter, which after a short, but sharp and bloody conflict, had also fallen, its defenders being overpowered and driven into the town. The fate of the town might now be said to be fulfilled ; for although its immediate fortifications were scarcely touched by the fire of the besiegers' batteries, and a powerful British fleet rode at anchor in its harbour, the whole allied forces were numerically insufficient for the occupation of the former, while the latter were exposed to a cross raking fire from the recently captured positions, which it was utterly impossible to return with any degree of effect. But although the fiery old British Admiral \* would have landed the whole of

\* Sir Samuel Hood.

his seamen to cooperate with the scanty remnants of British troops that, firm and undaunted, though fearfully diminished in number, still remained, (and among whom, as usual, murmurs began to arise at the mention of retreat,) with the determination to stand to the last, in the endeavour to regain the ground that had been lost, even the English military commanders were startled at the desperate proposal against the overwhelming odds opposed to them ; and in the anxious and prolonged discussions which followed, and which only served as an additional example of the verification of the old proverb that "councils of war never fight," the energetic old seaman found himself alone.

There was but one course to pursue, heart-rending as it was, and the measures for which were immediately entered upon in the promptest and most vigorous manner. The scenes which followed belong to history, and have too often and too truly been related in all their fearful atrocity to need repeating here. At the present period but few remember them ; but should any passing British traveller, in visiting this now grand *dépôt* of French industry and maritime power, as well as flourishing prosperity, ever stumble upon any of the few aged beings remaining in existence, who were eye-witnesses of the scenes alluded to, and will enter

freely into their recital, he will hear details that in thrilling interest surpass the wildest pages the most visionary romance could ever venture to portray.

It was about ten days after the fall of the town ; the horrors of its first occupation had in some measure subsided, though the guillotine still continued to ply its ghastly work upon the overloaded prisons ; the mitrallades having been obliged to be discontinued, from the military not only having refused, after the first fury of conquest had passed away, to execute them themselves, but repelling the Jacobin bands, and even the Gendarmes, who sought to obtain their artillery for the purpose.

In a small apartment overlooking the harbour, which commanded a view of the town and its fortifications, and reclining upon a couch, lay the young Commandant of artillery, now advanced to the rank of chef-de-brigade. He had evidently suffered extremely, and perhaps still continued to experience at intervals considerable pain, aggravated in all probability by natural irritability of temperament, and the irksome nature of his confinement. He was feeble and emaciated, and his features had become yet paler by the loss of blood he had sustained ; but his stern, searching eye, in its flashing keenness, pretty strongly expressed that



the spirit within was as active and energetic as ever, though occasionally a wandering, half-vacant expression would cross his countenance, evidently assumed to cover what was passing in his mind, since it formed a singular contrast to the furtive glances of watchful and vigilant activity which, involuntarily, in the same instant escaped him.

Seated by his side, with his arm in a sling, was the young stranger of whom so much has been previously related, from whose attitude of earnest attention it was evident the conversation that had passed between them, and continued at slight intervals, was one possessing the highest degree of interest in regard to himself.

"I have pointed out to you," said the young General, "clearly and distinctly, the advantages that may occur to you from attaching yourself to my fortunes. 'Tis true, at this moment, I am myself but a nameless man ; but my career is commencing, my star has risen in the horizon, bright and radiant in its course, and who shall determine where its setting will be?" And as he concluded, that wandering, dreamy expression we have already adverted to, came over his features, terminated, however, by a side-long glance, which seemed carefully to note the effect his words produced upon his auditor.

"You possess within yourself," said the latter, bluntly, "something more than what any ideal mysticism could impart to the human mind, and that is your own self-confidence and determined will, of which I have seen enough to be well aware it is backed by an iron and unswerving perseverance which nothing can turn, and which difficulty seems only to stimulate, instead of subdue; but relative to your offer, I cannot, while declining it, but proffer you my sincerest and most grateful acknowledgments, as under no circumstances would I ever take up arms against my own country."

"Your country has, at all events, proved herself an affectionate parent towards you," said the General, with a sneer, "and some of your compatriots, at any rate, are less biassed by such dutiful motives."

"She has been a harsh and cruel stepmother to me," said the young man, haughtily, "but I am not to be swerved from the path of honour by the actions of others, nor induced to become a traitor, because injustice has consigned me to exile and ruin. That honours and distinctions sometimes fall to those, false alike to their sovereign and country, as well as home and kindred, I am well aware; though even this poor vestige of prosperity

is but slight recompense for the contempt and abhorrence of all honest, high-minded men, of whom, whatever may be said of France and her sanguinary rulers, no one can assert that her army is destitute."

The soldier eyed his companion keenly for a moment, and then held out his hand. "Forgive me," he said, "that I should in any way have pained your feelings, which was far from my intention; believe me, the proposal I have made you, in no way engenders the risk of what you are led to infer, a degradation which I had seen enough of you to be well aware you would never stoop to; but the reasoning, and honourable motives, which actuate you in this instance, I cannot conceive are equally applicable to nations and governments in temporary alliance with your country, whose designs may be different, nay, even at times hostile, causing the friend of to-day to become the bitter enemy of the morrow."

"I owe neither allegiance nor duty towards any power or sovereign but my own," said the young man; "and provided I am secure from being brought into collision with my own countrymen, am free to accept what your generous kindness has proffered me on the instant, and which I do not hesitate to say, will render me eternally bound to

you by the strongest ties that gratitude can dictate. I have seen enough to be well aware of the truth of what you have mentioned in reference to the hollow alliance which the governments of Europe had formed against France, which, had it been carried out in sincerity of mind, *must* have accomplished its object, in spite of the want of vigour which has characterised its movements."

"Ay," rejoined the General, "jealousy has indeed done its work, and propagated rather than stayed the work of the revolution. Austria and Prussia, England and Russia, each in their turn have assisted in spreading the evil they so loudly proclaimed it was their wish and intention to arrest; and hereafter it will be known that France owed her salvation less to her own vaunted exertions, than to the want of union and incomprehensible follies committed by her enemies."

"Her salvation!" replied the stranger, with an exclamation of almost actual loathing, and glancing from the window, as if he dared not give expression to the reminiscence of scenes which must have passed almost within the view and hearing of both. "Salvation!" he continued, "say rather the demon rule, which has deluged her with blood—the blood of some of her noblest, best, and bravest, and which has caused the very name of France to

be regarded throughout the world as a theme for horror and abhorrence."

"I have said her salvation," said the General, calmly, "and in doing so, expressed it in reference to her national safety, which her madness had well-nigh compromised, and to the danger of which she was only sufficiently aroused by the acts and proclamations of the Austrian and Prussian commanders, which, seconded by the jealousies of their respective governments, completed the work the former had begun. The decree of the Prince of Cobourg, which plainly intimated the re-annexation of the frontier provinces to the German Empire, gave the first signal for union among the clashing and discordant factions, ready to consign all parties who differed from them to destruction; and this feeling, once aroused, quickly became universal, following as it did the manifests of the Duke of Brunswick;—this change, however, I repeat, would have been of but little avail in arresting the progress of the invaders, but for the dissensions prevalent in their own councils. When the energy of Clairfait had carried all before him, and the road to Paris lay open to his forces, on the surrender of Longwy and Verdun,—where were the Prussian commanders, and what was their object in so long lying inactive, when a simultaneous advance would

have crushed every vestige of revolution? Rumour has assigned the frightful epidemic which decimated their ranks as the cause, though it is well known that it is solely to be attributed to the order subsequently received from the court, directing the army to fall back upon the German frontier, and eventually to retire altogether from the contest."

"Do you then ascribe nothing to the cooperation of almost the entire population," inquired the youth, "and that enthusiasm which carried thousands to the frontier, to join the army in repelling the invasion?"

The General laughed scornfully as he replied, in tones of the bitterest contempt—

"Popular enthusiasm!—national cooperation!—fit instruments, indeed, to fill the hospitals; or, worse still, to prove a scourge to the country over which it is exercised.\* No; whether for eventual good or evil, France owes her successful opposition to foreign invasion to the veterans of Rochambeau,

\* If this opinion, the truth of which I am led to believe no military man will question, is applicable to a country like France, what must it be in reference to others, possessing in a far less degree those soldier-like qualities which so eminently characterise the French nation? As a corroboration of its correctness, the reader is referred to the recent works of several military authors, both Austrian and Piedmontese, upon the late wars in Northern Italy in 1848—49.

and the hundred and fifty thousand regular troops who had espoused the national cause. Ignorance, indeed, would lead to the supposition that you have merely to place a musket in the hands of a boorish peasant, and his conversion into a soldier is complete; but little regard being taken for the time, aye years, that are requisite for his organization and training, which, after all, actual service in the field before an enemy alone can perfect; for, let his discipline and courage be what it may, more is acquired by the soldier in the course of a single campaign than in a whole life-time passed in the mere routine of garrison duty in a town or fortress.\* Enthusiasm and popular feeling, when of a lasting nature, which is not often the case, are admirable materials to work upon, but never by themselves would have stayed for a moment the march of the Prussians after their defeat of Custine, as they must inevitably have captured Mentz, when

\* The reader will do well to remember that these are not the words of fiction he is perusing; and, should he require any additional testimony as to the importance of what they are intended to convey, let him turn to the pages of the Gurwood Despatches, wherein Britain's greatest military hero at first speaks of a soldier who has witnessed a campaign as fully equal to two others who have not; while later, as even his experience becomes more extended upon the subject, he adverts to one of the former being worth even three of the latter.

once more Paris would have been at their mercy, had they but been supported in their turn by the Austrians. Besides, if still incredulous after what I have adduced, recal to mind what we have witnessed here."

"The example to which you allude," returned the stranger, "I should rather have thought was to be attributed to cool courage and determination, for which the English have usually been celebrated, rather than to any preeminent degree of military skill and discipline."

"Invaluable as the qualifications you have mentioned undoubtedly are," said the General, "they never would have enabled their possessors to maintain their ground as they did, in spite of the odds opposed to them, were it not that their self-reliance rested upon a much firmer and securer basis. In entering upon the contest, England may not have been actuated by that jealousy and suspicion of her confederates, which has proved so detrimental to their success, but she has done their cause, and her own, an equal, if not far greater degree of injury; and, either by her false economy, or inability to comprehend the true value of her position, she has lost an opportunity that never can be regained. If instead of five she had sent twenty thousand men to the succour of this ill-



fated city, the result would have been far different, and the whole of the South would have instantaneously risen with every prospect of success ; the more particularly since the proclamation of the English admiral, couched in very different terms to those of the northern confederates, wounded no feeling of nationality, and was what, under similar circumstances, even any royalist commander might himself have issued. With Toulon as a point for the centre of her operations, and the whole country in insurrection against the existing order of things, England could have brought her colossal maritime power into play, on the coast of the northern and western provinces, almost without opposition. For whatever eventual good France may derive from her revolution, it has had the present evil of crushing, if not irretrievably ruining, her naval armaments ; as, almost exclusively officered from the proscribed classes, the bravest and best of her marine have been offered as holocausts to the guillotine, or been drawn into exile and ruin."

"A loyal and grateful reward, truly," replied the young man, with some bitterness, "for their noble devotion and services to their country ; and highly encouraging to those desirous of following a career subordinate to the orders of such a government."

"All tempests," said the soldier, "whatever their nature may be, and however frightful and desolating in the ravages they create, have sooner or later a termination—a termination, too, that not unfrequently, in the good it subsequently creates, obliterates all recollection of the sacrifice at which it has been obtained; and France may prove no exception to the rule. The sanguinary hierarchy, which still continues its blood-stained sway, must at least pause in its career when one party has devoured the other, and that which remains glances round in search of fresh victims. It is then that—even amongst the worst and most evil-minded, will arise the question, '*Is this never to end?*' Those words once uttered, retribution will quickly follow; for *then* all classes, including even the most timid, will unite to swell the cry, and the country will turn its eyes towards any one willing to stand forward and preserve her from the gulf into which she is rushing."

"They will look long enough then," rejoined the stranger, "among the gang of butchers who constitute her present rulers, before they are likely to meet the character you describe."

That dreamy, wandering expression we have previously adverted to, seemed to cross the features of the General as these words were uttered;

but, as if unmindful of their import, and scarcely addressing his companion, he said—

“Circumstances, trivial in themselves, often lead to events of the most momentous importance; and it is therefore rarely found that when convulsions rock the world to its base, its even tenor is subsequently regained, till almost everything relating to the previously existing order of things is overthrown, if not completely destroyed. France is in all probability now passing through an ordeal, which, however great the present suffering it entails, may prove the precursor of her future prosperity and welfare, as well as of a glory which will render even her previous annals, fertile as they have been in illustrious deeds, as mere shadows in comparison: and from the creation of such events, will arise those to whose guidance will be hereafter committed the task of preserving the kingdom from the factious anarchy which at present devours it, and which, unless arrested in its progress by a strong and powerful hand, must eventually consign it to destruction and ruin. However,” he concluded, after a thoughtful pause, “I have laid everything clearly and distinctly before you, and the result must now be left to your own decision, before arriving at which, perhaps you had better reflect upon what I have said.”

“To one situated like myself,” said the young man, “reflection is of little avail, since I may scarcely be said to possess an alternative; but were it otherwise, my resolution would be the same; and, attach what value you will to my declaration, I care not to avow, there is that in your words and manner which irresistibly attracts me towards you; and whether the path may lead me to the guillotine, or that prosperity which you seem to anticipate, my choice is made, and come what will, I am determined to adhere to your fortunes, to which I now attach myself, with at least all the fervour that a grateful heart can dictate.”

The General extended his hand. “I will not say you have chosen well,” he said, “as that remains to be seen in whatever fate destiny may hereafter award us both; but I feel an inward conviction, that you will eventually have little occasion to regret the step you have taken; prosperity has smiled brightly upon this commencement of my career, and Fortune is seldom sparing of her favours towards those of her votaries whom she sees prompt to seize upon every opportunity that offers, to profit by them;—and now,” he concluded, “to render you what little assistance I can towards your recommencement in life, my purse is not a very heavy one, but it can well spare

what I have to proffer for the use of my new comrade."

The stranger drew back, and seemed to shrink from the *rouleau* the General pressed upon him ; but the latter forced it into his hand, at the same time good-humouredly exclaiming, although in a tone not altogether free from a certain degree of command, " Come, come, young man, no reply ; I see I must give you a lesson in subordination, relative to your new position. And now for the last question I have to ask,—by what name am I to know you ?"

" Edward Harcourt," returned the youth in a voice which shook with the visible emotion of grateful feeling ; " and let me in my turn solicit that of the generous benefactor to whom I am so much indebted."

" Napoleon Buonaparte !" was the reply.

## CHAPTER III.

THE cannon thundered with renewed and tripled violence on the plain of Marengo. It was now past four o'clock, and the victorious Austrians, worn out with their exertions, having been in motion, and for the greater part of the time hotly engaged, from daybreak on the sultry and oppressive day of the 14th June, had been severely checked, and witnessed their dear-bought victory snatched from their grasp, by the advancing divisions of Bonn and Desaix, which so opportunely arrived to save the French army from destruction.

The brave and experienced, but aged and infirm Austrian Commander, had retired from the field in the full security that the day was won, exhausted by physical fatigue, and unable to rise from the couch on which he had thrown himself to recruit his enfeebled and worn-out frame. It was at this critical moment, when the broken divisions of Lannes and Victor had succeeded in rallying, sup-

ported by the powerful reserve so unexpectedly brought forward, that the whole united mass burst like a torrent upon the astonished Austrians, covered by Marmont's artillery, which tore through their ranks with frightful carnage.

The Imperialists, however, met the onset with the same steady bravery they had manifested throughout the day, and which had hitherto so successfully baffled and defeated their impetuous adversaries, when a new event occurred, to which their formation at the moment lent a most fatal influence. They were advancing in open column, unaware of the disasters which had occurred on their right, and which had left their flank altogether *en l'air*, when, from several vineyards which masked the movement, there came a rushing sound, which gradually increased to a roar, that rose even above the cannonade which raged throughout the field. It proceeded from Kellerman's magnificent cavalry, and was the execution of that brilliant and celebrated charge, which, emanating from the inspiration and chivalrous bravery of their gallant leader, proved the event which decided the fate of this sanguinary day; as in a minute, the Austrian columns were ridden through, trampled down, and sabred in every direction, those who escaped flying in the utmost confusion to the rear, and adding to

the disorganization already commencing in the ranks of those divisions of the army which, up to this period, had still maintained their order and discipline.

The balls had been flying in showers round the First Consul, and ploughing up the earth under his horse's hoofs; but it was at the very moment that the tide of conquest had turned, and he already beheld the prospect of that brilliant triumph which subsequently placed him at the pinnacle of his fame, that his eagle eye detected a rallying-point for his adversaries, which, had it been acted upon on the instant, might even yet have retrieved the fortune of the day, and turned the scale once more in favour of the Austrians.

On the left there still remained an entire division of their army, whose ranks were unbroken, and who had apparently suffered comparatively little in the contest. It consisted of eight battalions of infantry, and two regiments of Alvinzi's brilliant cavalry, Hungarian hussars, the latter of whom were drawn up in rear of the right of the former.

A single glance was sufficient to apprise the First Consul that the struggle had yet to be renewed, and the result rendered more than ever doubtful, should these troops be skilfully handled,



and brought to cover the re-formation of the disordered masses, many of whom, although in a state of disarray and confusion, could, protected by so numerous and powerful a support, have easily been rallied. Plunging the spurs into his charger's sides, he flew to the rear with all the speed that his horse could carry him. His reserves had already almost all been brought forward, and his last chance must be hazarded with the small force that remained. How often subsequently was a similar risk encountered with an equal degree of success!

Sheltered by some gardens, were drawn up six squadrons of cuirassiers and three battalions of grenadiers—those splendid veterans, who afterwards became the nucleus for the formation of that brilliant corps, unsurpassed in discipline and bravery, and whose glory became renowned not only in the annals of their own country, but throughout Europe—the old Imperial Guard! While the cavalry, however, were quite fresh—neither horses nor riders having hitherto undergone any fatigue, beyond that engendered by the long march which preceded their arrival on the field—the infantry had already been hotly engaged, and had suffered severely, having been brought into action at the most critical period, when the

French had first commenced their retreat, which they had only arrested by marching slowly, and entirely unsupported, into the very midst of the imperialists, exposed to a murderous fire, and then retiring unbroken, with similar deliberation, when charged on all sides by masses of cavalry and infantry, though not till order had been restored, by the exertions of the First Consul, in their rear.

The officer in command of the cuirassiers, who wore the uniform of a colonel, was a fine, dashing-looking, soldier-like man, about three or four and thirty years of age. He had taken off his helmet in consequence of the excessive heat, revealing, in doing so, a handsome set of features, dusk and sunburnt by constant exposure and the rough training of military service, which singularly contrasted with his high, pale forehead, surmounted with its dark waving hair. The countenance was expressive of buoyant hope, energy, and determination; the thick curling moustache, which covered his upper lip, imparting additional resolution to its *tout ensemble*, which, but for the frankness and good-humour which pervaded it, would have lent rather a stern character than otherwise to its general outline; there were, indeed, few or no traces by which the broken-spirited English exile

could have been recognised in the bold and successful favourite of Napoleon,—the delight of his comrades, the idol of his men, and whose rapid promotion had been the theme of applause and approbation throughout the entire army, as an example of the rank and station that rewarded the bravery and devotion of its soldiers.

True to his determination, Edward Harcourt had adhered with the most unshaken constancy, through good and through evil, to the fortunes of his benefactor. After the termination of the siege of Toulon,—when through hatred or fear, or that abhorrence of successful merit, for which mediocrity in any shape is ever remarkable, every attempt was made to consign the young General to oblivion, in return for the brilliant services he had rendered; when reduced almost to actual want, he was seriously thinking of retiring from France, and proceeding to Constantinople to offer his services to the Sultan, for the purpose of instructing the Turks in the practice of artillery,—Harcourt ever remained with him; and, free from any personal bias in the political agitations and distractions which then prevailed, he foresaw and predicted to the young chieftain, when nearly brought, by indigence and despondency, to the verge of despair, that the period was not far distant when he

would be once more called upon for active and vigorous exertion,—a prophecy subsequently fulfilled to an extent and with a rapidity which, perhaps, he who made it at the time little anticipated!

In the affair of the Sections—when those celebrated words of Barras, long, long afterwards remembered, “I have the man we want—a little Corsican,” laid the foundation of those tremendous events which shook Europe for twenty years afterwards,—Harcourt had exerted himself to accomplish the views of the General, with an intelligence and ability, as well as courage and conduct, which had strongly elicited his Commander’s approbation, and, if possible, strengthened his regard for his *protégé*. On being nominated by the Directors to the command of the army of Italy, the new Commander-in-chief had appointed Harcourt to his personal staff, from which he had joined the heavy cavalry, though constantly in attendance upon the General as *officier d’ordonnance*. He served throughout the whole of these campaigns, acquiring no slight distinction at the bloody battles of Montebotte, Arcola, Lodi, and Rivoli; and the conclusion of the war at the treaty of Campo Formio witnessed his elevation to the rank he at present held. On the return of Napoleon from Egypt, and his subse-

quent elevation to the supreme power, Harcourt, who had been left in Italy, was one of the first among those he summoned around him, and had been nominated to the command of a regiment destined to form part of the expedition proceeding to the theatre of their former brilliant and successful career.

On the memorable day to which our narrative now alludes, the regiment of Harcourt had formed part of the division of the gallant and long-after lamented Desaix, and reached the field of battle shortly after four o'clock in the afternoon, almost immediately following the arrival of the main body. It was immediately drawn up in the position we have already adverted to, by the First Consul himself, and united to the remnants of the heroic and gallant veterans, whose devoted and chivalrous courage had, in all probability, saved the French army from destruction in the early part of the day.

Harcourt's orders had been, on no account whatever to move, unless directed either by the General-in-chief himself, or one of his immediate staff: on seeing, therefore, the First Consul advancing at speed towards his men, he at once divined that the moment for action had arrived,—an expectation in which he was not deceived, when the

voice of his superior called out as he approached, in accents that rivalled the stirring notes of the trumpet—"To your right, Harcourt, lies your commission as General of Brigade."

The Englishman raised himself in his stirrups, and glanced eagerly in the direction the First Consul had indicated. The Austrian infantry, which at this period, under General Zach, had been deployed, were now in the act of re-forming column,—a perilous movement at all times, in presence of an active and enterprising body of cavalry,\*

\* There is, perhaps, no question so completely an "open" one, as that of the movement of infantry (unless in column) in presence of an active and vigilant mounted enemy, though, in all probability, a solution would be best obtained by a reference to the national and peculiar characteristics of the troops to whom allusion is made. For instance, what might be safely attempted with French, would be very problematical in regard to a successful issue with others; while relative to the British Infantry, the celebrated General Foy has observed,—“That they who knew its value should move it but seldom, and, even under circumstances of the greatest hazard and difficulty, trust rather to the cool intrepidity and determined resolution which has so invariably, from time immemorial, distinguished the British soldier.” The accuracy of the observation of this gallant and experienced officer and historian, was certainly confirmed by the brilliant conduct of the 28th Regiment at the Battle of Waterloo. This corps was drawn up in line, when it was all at once charged in front and rear by the French cuirassiers. “In that trying moment,” says Siborne, in his admirable history of the campaign, “not a sound was heard from the ranks save the voice of the Colonel (the late Sir Philip Belson) as he gave

and in the present instance doubly so, from their flank being completely exposed, and their adversaries a second time so entirely sheltered by the foliage of the trees and gardens, which screened them from observation, as to be wholly invisible. Another event was also destined to exercise a most fatal influence upon the fortunes of the imperialists at this critical moment, and this was the unaccountable inaction of the brigade of hussars, destined for their support, who remained immoveable in their saddles, despite the fierce exclamations of impatience which burst both from officers and men, —their commander waiting for orders! being one of that heavy, stupid class of cross-grained martinetts, who never ventured upon anything himself, or permitted others to do so, unless under the sanction of superior authority ; and who, most unfortunately, had been sent expressly from headquarters, (perhaps, to control the fiery spirits thus made subordinate to him,) to assume the command on the death of the Hungarian leader, who had fallen in a desperate charge upon the square

the word for the rear rank to face about." The cavalry came rushing on; in another moment, it would almost seem as if their horses' heads must touch the array of bayonets before them, when the word "Fire" rung out; and as the smoke cleared away, it revealed the entire space covered with the fallen bodies of men and horses, and the survivors in full and hasty retreat.

of the old grenadiers, when they had so boldly attempted in the morning, in their march alike through friends and foes, to retrieve the fortunes of the day.

With the rapidity of lightning, Harcourt at once comprehended the General's intentions ; he waved his sabre round his head and galloped forward, as in a voice of stirring energy the words of command issued from his lips, and followed each other in quick and fiery succession ;—" Form column of divisions! \*—the regiment will advance at a gallop! —By successive divisions—charge ! ”

The thunder of the horses' hoofs, as they rushed at full speed, was the first intimation the Austrians received of the approach of their fresh and formidable enemy ; and taken, as they were, at every disadvantage, there could be but little doubt as to the result. The officers commanding the leading squadrons of the hussars, indeed, no sooner beheld the coming storm, than, without waiting for the orders of their superior, they wheeled to the right, and rushed forward to meet it, in the hope, if possible, to save their infantry, and thus gain time for their formation ; but, could they have hoped to have been a match for their ponderous adver-

\* In the continental armies, a division is formed of two squadrons led by a field-officer.



saries, whose weight alone bore down everything before them, the movement was too late to be attempted with any chance of success; and with the first shock they were ridden through, sabred, and trampled down on the instant; while, in the next, the mailed horsemen were in the midst of the disordered infantry, with the force of a thunderbolt!

Carried away by their impetuous spirit, and flushed with success, Harcourt and his brilliant chivalry continued to press forward with irresistible energy, carrying all before them. But a very few moments were requisite to show the master-mind that all further resistance was now hopeless, and that this last movement, directed by himself, had decided the terrible contest which had so long raged, assuring him of the greatest victory which, up to this period, had distinguished his career. The shattered remains of Monnier's corps—which, in spite of the success that had attended Desaix and Kellerman, still continued hard pressed in their retrograde movement—now turned fiercely upon their pursuers, already disordered by the numbers of fugitives of their own army, which covered the whole plain, and crowded upon their ranks to an extent that, at length, threw them into the most irretrievable confusion; and they themselves were borne along by the torrent, the

rout becoming general, and a desperate effort being made to gain the Bormida before their retreat was cut off.

As the last corps of the imperialists which retained anything like order, broke and fled with the rest, Harcourt dashed towards several light field-batteries, the men of which had stood nobly by their guns, which they plied with equal vigour and celerity, in the endeavour to cover the retreat of their comrades. They were commanded by a fine, dashing fellow, who directed their movements, and were animated by a veteran General of infantry, who, after vain and fruitless efforts to rally some of the fugitives, had galloped up to the artillery, apparently determined not to quit the field as long as there appeared the remotest prospect of any resistance being continued.

As the French cavalry advanced upon the guns, they were quickly limbered up; and though they rushed at full speed towards the river, it was easy to perceive the men maintained the most perfect order. Their commander and the old General were in the rear, evidently looking out for an opportunity when they could turn upon their pursuers with any chance of success, when a random shot struck the horse of the latter, which fell heavily to the earth, bearing his rider along with him.

There now seemed every prospect of the gallant veteran being trampled to death, beneath the hoofs of the advancing French cavalry; but Harcourt, who had throughout witnessed and admired the bravery and strenuous exertions of his noble enemy, had seen the accident, and, as his men came thundering on, he shouted out,—“ By pelotons—open right and left ! ” The cuirassiers promptly wheeled outwards, and the old man was saved.

“ Je me rends, Monsieur,” he said, with great dignity, as Harcourt reined up his horse for the moment, and extending his hand, assisted him to rise. It was the gallant old General Zach.

Harcourt still continued his pursuit of the Austrian artillery, but such was the skill and courage of his adversary, that all his efforts to arrest his progress were unavailing. They were now close upon the river, the sight of which led him to believe the prize was in his grasp, all the bridges being thronged with a dense mass of fugitives, who impeded the progress of each other, while the banks were covered with the fragments of broken caissons, arms, and waggons, as well as covered with the dead and dying.

Loud shouts burst from the French at the spectacle, and it was evident they deemed the capture of the guns as certain, when they beheld the gallant

Imperialist and his men half rein up, as if in doubt and perplexity what course to pursue. The pause, however, was but momentary, one instant's reflection seeming to determine the Austrian in the line he had chosen, as his horses were suddenly urged to their utmost speed, and then springing over every obstacle, men, guns, and chargers, dashed fiercely into the foaming stream; a roar of admiration, even from their enemies, following the exploit, which met with the success it so well merited, some of their pieces alone sticking fast in the bed of the river; but the traces being promptly cut, the men and horses, the most valuable portion of the *matériel*, altogether escaped.

Arrived on the opposite side, they were encountered by an aged and infirm man, who, supported on horseback by two attendants, had with difficulty been enabled to reach the bank from a village about three hundred yards distant. Though in a state of utter exhaustion, his presence seemed to act like magic on the flying soldiery, who were at once reanimated by the appearance of their chief—for Melas himself, apprised of the extent of the disaster, had hurried down to the river—and encouraged by the support of their artillery; which, now that they had reached the opposite side in security, quickly unlimbered, and re-opened briskly

upon the victorious French. Some degree of order became gradually restored: through the heroic and determined resistance of the troops which the veteran Commander had succeeded in bringing together to form as a rear-guard, the bridges were cleared, and the imperialist forces ultimately enabled to effect their retreat.

Harcourt drew off his men, and the night was closing in as he rode up and delivered his report to the First Consul, whose brief salutation to him, as he extended his hand, was,—“General, you have well deserved the promotion you have attained!”

## CHAPTER IV.

THE bright and glorious sun of an Italian summer morning rose in the early part of the month of July, about three weeks after the memorable event we have adverted to in our last chapter, upon one of those glowing pictures which, perhaps, the rich plains of Lombardy alone throughout the whole world could furnish. Far as the eye could reach rose one continued scene of fertility, cultivation, and beauty: the corn was waving in golden luxuriance, the vineyards were loaded with their rich cargoes of fruit, while, stretching up to the very sides of the fine level roads, for which the province has ever been distinguished, the vines, festooned from tree to tree, imparted to the whole an aspect of unrivalled beauty which it would be difficult even for the most accomplished artist faithfully to portray.

Heavy showers had fallen at intervals during the night, which had cooled the air to a delicious

freshness, and rendered the foliage still brighter in its verdant colouring. As the glorious orb of morning rose above the horizon, in a sky the rich blue tint of which was now unmingled with the slightest cloud, its rays fell upon the gleaming helmets and breastplates of a small detachment of French cuirassiers on their route from Brescia to Milan.

The party consisted of a sergeant and twelve men, forming the escort of the general officer, who rode at their head, and who, wearing the same uniform as themselves, was evidently either returning from a round of inspection of the brigade he commanded, which lay cantoned in the neighbourhood, or was proceeding on some special duty to head-quarters. Though the carbines of the advanced and rear files were sprung,\* as usual with a body of cavalry proceeding on its march, a glance was sufficient to intimate they had no expectation of meeting an enemy on their route; and that the country around them, however lately the theatre of operations for two powerful and numerous armies, for the present, at least, was in a state of profound tranquillity, owing to the Convention of Alexandria, which had almost immediately followed the sanguinary day of Marengo, and

\* The military term for being carried in rest, or ready for action.

which left the French forces in peaceful possession of the Milannais, and the western part of Northern Italy as far as the Chiesa and the Po.

Not a sound seemed to break upon the stillness of the morning, save the clatter of the horses' hoofs upon the road, the occasional clash of the accoutrements of the horsemen, or the echo of their voices, as they beguiled the tedium of their march by the narratives of former campaigns, future hopes, and present pleasures, the usual theme for a soldier's story, whether in camp, the line of march, or the bivouac. Glancing occasionally upon the beautiful country around him in silent admiration, Harcourt, for he was the general we have alluded to, rode at the head of his men, listening to their discourse with amusement and interest, and not unfrequently encouraging some fresh recital by the questions he put to elicit it. A bluff, burly, *vieux moustache*, was dilating, in that spirit of mirth and good-humour which ever distinguishes the French soldier, and which causes him quickly to forget even the heaviest misfortune, when its effects have passed away, upon the contrast the army of Italy afforded at the present period, to that which it exhibited on the commencement of the campaigns of 1794; when, as the old warrior expressed it, if fighting could have



satisfied their digestion, they certainly had enough of it, for they had but little else to live upon ;—when a great-coat or cloak was scarcely to be seen ; when the infantry were without shoes, and one pair of jack-boots per peloton for the cavalry, was the very utmost that any inspecting general could reasonably hope to see in a regiment :—he was proceeding with his narrative, amidst the laughter of his hearers, when a loud, piercing scream rang upon the air.

In an instant all was silence, and, as if instinctively, each bridle was drawn, all reining up upon the instant.

“Diantre !” exclaimed Harcourt, “from whence could that cry have proceeded ?”

The horsemen, at the period this accident occurred, had reached a point in the road possessing a slight degree of elevation above the rest, and consequently commanded a view of the surrounding country, and the route they were traversing, to the extent of some six hundred yards ; at the termination of this distance, however, the road took an abrupt and sudden turn, and was lost among the trees and festooned vines we have already adverted to as skirting the hedges on its sides. The veteran sergeant dashed a few paces in advance, and gazed eagerly and intently upon the

view before him; but not a single living being presented itself, nor indeed any other object by which an elucidation could be obtained of the mysterious incident which had arrested their march. The word was already on Harcourt's lips, directing it to be resumed, when once more a long and loud succession of agonizing shrieks burst upon the ear, which, borne upon the stillness of the morning, evidently proceeded from a considerable distance before them.

"By Heaven!" said Harcourt, "it is the voice of a woman in distress. *En avant, mes enfans! au galop!*" and plunging his spurs into his charger's sides, and followed by his men, they rode full speed up the road, guided by the cries, which, although at times suddenly suppressed, as if efforts were being made to gag the person who uttered them, would break forth in all the bitter anguish of a being in its last mortal agony.

On they flew, tearing along the road, but meeting with nothing that could in any way account for what they had heard, till, on turning the corner we have already alluded to, a full explanation burst at once upon their view. About a hundred yards before them lay a travelling-carriage, which had been partially overturned in the ditch by the road-side, the malles and imperials of which had

been forced open, and, lying upon the ground, were being diligently plundered by a gang of marauders who surrounded them; while further on was a young girl, struggling in the grasp of four or five other ruffians, from whom proceeded the piercing cries which had first attracted the horsemen's attention. A single glance was sufficient to explain how matters stood, and to show, moreover, that the miscreants were a marauding party from the French lines.

"Draw swords," shouted Harcourt, "and down with every man of them!—cut them down—no quarter!" and dashing up to the men who had hold of the young girl, he clove the foremost to the chin, and whirling his blade, passed it through the heart of a second. The plunderers had been so intently occupied in their task, that they were not even aware of the presence of the cuirassiers, till the latter were actually sabring among them;—an office they exercised with unsparing severity, viewing their adversaries as a set of vermin, disgracing their colours and country, and consequently meriting no consideration whatever,—their cries for mercy being answered with execration and derision.

The ruffians fled in every direction on the instant, jumping through the hedges, and among the vines and bushes, in the hope of, by these

means, escaping the relentless swords of their avenging countrymen. In this the greater part succeeded, leaving eight of their number dead behind them, though the wounds of several who survived led to their subsequent detection, and the expiation of their crimes by the Provost-marshal.

Harcourt had stooped from his horse, and caught the young girl in his left arm, as the miscreants who held her let go their hold; but one of them, disappointed of his prey, turned round in a fury of impotent rage, and discharged a pistol either at his rescued victim or her deliverer, which had very nearly been attended with the most fatal effect, as the ball, whizzing past the head of the former, struck the lower part of the General's cuirass, and glanced off under his arm.

As the last of their late adversaries disappeared, and Harcourt directed the sergeant to call off his men from their fruitless efforts at pursuit,—which only terminated in the horses getting their feet entangled in the vines, which, trailing upon the earth, brought their burly riders, and the animals themselves, in several instances, to the ground,—he sprang from his own charger, and endeavoured to reanimate the half-lifeless form he held in his arms. He was not without success, as after a short

time she partially opened her eyes and gazed wildly around her ; then, clasping her hands together, she exclaimed, in tones of the greatest anguish, " My father ! O God ! my father ! "

Harcourt called out to the sergeant, but the veteran had already anticipated him, and directing several of the men to dismount, they approached the carriage. Under one of the wheels they found the apparently lifeless body of a fine-looking, elderly person, bleeding profusely from a deep cut in the head ; near him lay a powerful, athletic-looking man, apparently a courier, or upper-servant, who, from his position, had evidently fallen in the attempt to defend his master and mistress ; while in the ditch was found a somewhat aged female, unwounded, but almost paralysed by terror. It was some time ere confidence could be restored to the rescued victims, who, from the uniforms of their deliverers, were at first led to believe they had only been released from one set of enemies to fall into the power of another. Gradually, however, their fears were calmed by the assiduous efforts and attentions of those around them. The *gouvernante* was the first to recover her self-possession, and with it that use of the faculty of speech for which the sex in general, and women of her class in particular, are usually celebrated, as rushing towards her young

mistress, she clasped her in her arms, overwhelming her with the usual torrent of tender Italian vociferation—"Cara Padrona—benedetta,—anima mia!"

Consigning his charge to her care, Harcourt now turned his attention towards the wounded travellers. On being carefully raised by the soldiers, it was soon ascertained that the old noble, (for such the appearance of the elder of the two, together with the armorial bearings on the carriage, unquestionably denoted him,) though somewhat severely, was by no means very dangerously hurt; as the wound, though it bled profusely, was not deep; and on being washed with some water from the clear stream running by the road-side, and bandaged with no slight degree of skill by the veteran sergeant, who evidently appeared no novice in such matters, he quickly recovered.

The wounds of the servant proved the most serious; and one, a severe stab in the breast from a long knife or short infantry sword, seemed to wear a fatal appearance, in consequence of its having apparently pierced the lungs, from the heavy breathing that issued from the orifice which the blow had occasioned.

The rapture of the young girl, on ascertaining the safety of her father, had burst forth in the wildest expressions of delight, as she hung upon his breast;

but now disengaging herself from him, she sprang towards the servant, and, with streaming eyes, called out, in a voice almost inarticulate with emotion, "Oh, Franz! dear, dear Franz!—they have killed him in trying to save me."

The iron visages around were evidently somewhat contorted by this simple appeal, emanating as it did from the pure and confiding spirit of childish affection; but the sergeant, stepping forward, after more than one effort to clear his throat, at length said:—

"Not so bad as that, I hope, Mam'selle. But we are within a league of where the brigade lies, to which these scoundrels belonged,"—and the veteran bestowed a hearty kick with his heavy jack-boot upon one of the bodies lying near;—"and the sooner we get him into the doctor's hands, the better will be his chance of recovery."

"For heaven's sake let us be moving, then!" returned the traveller, with an evident degree of anxiety and alarm. "You are soldiers," he continued, addressing the cuirassiers, drawing himself up with dignity and pride, "and I may mention, that this is not only an old and faithful retainer, but one who was for a long time sergeant in the regiment I formerly commanded, in which capacity he twiced saved my own life."

The old man bowed courteously in reply, as he said, "To you, Sir, if I mistake not, I am bound by a debt of everlasting gratitude, as the officer who was the saviour of my child,"—and his voice faltered. Suddenly he exclaimed, in tones of alarm, "My God, Sir! you are"—

"Father, father!" shrieked the young girl, as she rushed towards Harcourt, "he is wounded,—my noble deliverer is wounded!"

Harcourt now, for the first time, observed that the ball of the ruffian who fired at him, in glancing from his cuirass, had struck his arm, tearing the coat; and although it only inflicted a slight flesh wound, it bled somewhat profusely.

"It is of little moment," he said, smiling, as he hastily tied a handkerchief round the limb, and then directed the men to get the carriage up in order to proceed on their journey.

This was very soon accomplished, and the malles and imperials hastily packed and replaced in their former places. The postilion had fled at the very commencement of the fray, but the horses had fortunately remained perfectly quiet; and as it was requisite they should proceed at a very slow pace, his absence was of little moment, since one of the soldiers, stationed at their head for the purpose, could easily lead them along the road. The wounded man was slowly and carefully placed



in the interior, the French soldiers having, with considerable ingenuity, by means of cloaks and cushions, contrived to form a sort of couch for him to lie upon; and having desired his daughter and her attendant to take their places beside him, the gentleman turned to Harcourt and courteously requested he would occupy the coupé of the berline with himself. The latter would have declined the offer, but was pressed so urgently to accept it, that, flinging the bridle of his charger to one of the men, he entered the vehicle, and took his seat by the side of its proprietor.

They were no sooner in motion, than the latter, turning to his companion, said in a low voice,—  
“I am speaking to a gentleman whom I presume to be an officer of rank, and one whom I feel assured possesses that high and chivalrous feeling which formerly distinguished the military of France, and which even her blood-stained revolution, with all its horrors and excesses, has been unable to eradicate from the ranks of her army—may I solicit the favour of knowing whom I have the honour of addressing.”

“Edward Harcourt, commanding a Brigade in the division of Milhaud’s Cuirassiers.”

“And I, Sir,” replied the traveller, with slow and deliberate emphasis, as if watching the effect the intelligence produced upon his hearer,

"beg to announce myself as—the Count de Melzi."

Harcourt bowed to this intimation of his companion's being the representative of one of the most ancient and illustrious, as well as the wealthiest and most powerful families of the old Milanese nobility; but as the information seemed to elicit from him nothing beyond a mere courteous acknowledgment, the old nobleman with some surprise said, "I was afraid the announcement I have made would have been productive of a different impression to that which it has occasioned; and—and," he continued, with some degree of hesitation, "pardon me for saying it, one not altogether of a very friendly nature, considering who and what you are."

"Oh," replied Harcourt, laughing, "I am well aware that rumour ascribes to the Count de Melzi, views and opinions much more in accordance with the Ghibelline predilections of his family in former times than with the state of things as existing at present; but as it is credibly asserted that he is a noble veteran soldier, who has never mingled in political affairs, and has, moreover, for many years past, altogether lived in retirement, in consequence of wounds received during his former military career, I am at a loss to conceive how his presence

could create any other feeling than that of respect in the mind of any one, without reference to country, profession, or opinion."

"I was previously well aware," said the Count, "and had already mentioned to you, that whatever evil the Revolution has effected in France, it has not uprooted that noble and chivalrous feeling which has ever distinguished her brave and gallant army; but these sentiments, it would appear, rest exclusively among the military, and are anything but participated in by the great body of her people, still less, perhaps, by her government."

"If, in reference to the existing government," replied Harcourt, warmly, "your observation implies any allusion to the First Consul, I must beg that you will disabuse your mind of any such impressions."

"Umph," said the Count, drily; "he is not likely to retain that title long, I think."

Harcourt coloured, bit his lip, but was silent; and the old noble, after a pause, at length said, extending his hand, "I will deal frankly with you, and that on the word of a soldier, without the least mental reservation. Whatever may be the fate of this country in the negotiations now impending, I can never but recognise the one sovereign to whom my loyalty and allegiance have ever been,

and ever will be, devoted. I am now too old to change either my views, habits, or opinions; though, were I even at this moment only beginning life, instead of verging towards its close, I feel that conviction within me which assures me that they would remain the same, or, at all events, never change to others founded upon deeds and events, which the generality of the world must ever view with hatred and abhorrence. My sons are at present serving in the Imperial army, and it was in consequence of an intimation, as I thought of the surest nature, privately conveyed to me from Milan, that I last night started from a villa I possess about fifty miles from this, with the intention of seeking refuge within the Austrian frontier; having received the assurance that it was the intention of the French authorities in Lombardy, to excite the peasantry against their seigneurs, and create a *Jacquerie*, in the idea that, pending the present armistice, it might assist their views in the severance of the *Milannais* from the empire."

"I should have thought," indignantly rejoined Harcourt, "that recent events in France would at least have saved her ruler from this atrocious calumny; and that the iron hand with which he has suppressed the scenes you describe, in his own country, affords the surest conviction of how little

likely he would be to encourage such a system in another, particularly in one which, to all intents and purposes, is at present subordinate to his rule—and—and—I care not to avow it—very likely to remain so. Believe me,” he continued, “that on the word of a man of honour, you have been misled by information either altogether unfounded, and malicious in its nature, or else the creation of some visionary alarmist. I am now on my way to the headquarters of the First Consul, and aware as he must be of everything connected with you, I will pledge you my parole that, if you will do me the honour of accompanying me, from himself you will receive the fullest assurance that no one, whatever he may have said or done in regard to the past government, will ever be molested on that account,—an adhesion, or at least, a non-resistance to that which may hereafter be established, being all that is required of them. In his present state, it will be impossible for this poor fellow of yours to be removed for a long time yet. I will have him under the especial charge of the officer commanding the brigade of Monnier’s division, the outposts of which are now close to us; and then, if satisfied with what I have adduced, we can resume our route under the escort I have with me; and, pardon me for saying it—considering

what has occurred, and that marauding parties from both armies, and other *canaille*, may be prowling over the country in the present uncertain state of affairs, it becomes a duty on your part," and by a slight motion he glanced towards the interior of the carriage, "not lightly to reject the offer I have made."

The old noble seemed deeply affected at the earnestness with which Harcourt addressed him, and after a time, said, "You have indeed touched upon a theme which has impressed me with a painful—I may indeed say—a frightful degree of interest: situated as I am, perhaps, even if your anticipations should not be realized, following your suggestions may prove the lesser evil of the two."

"You have, at least, my word, Monsieur le Comte," replied Harcourt, "as a General officer of the French army, to guarantee the truth of the assertion I have made."

"A guarantee that I as candidly accept on the part of the gallant soldier who proffers it," said the Count, pressing the hand of his companion with visible emotion, "as I fully exonerate him from all consequences in the event of its not being ratified by his superiors. And believe me, when I say, that whatever may hereafter occur, the obligation

you have conferred upon me this morning, as the saviour of my child, as well as myself, will never, never, under any circumstances or in any situation of life, be obliterated from the minds of either. But here we are, if I mistake not, at your outposts."

The carriage drew up as the cry of the advanced sentry rung out in its sharp clear tones, "*Halte là!*" but on seeing who it contained, and the escort by which it was accompanied, it was at once admitted within the French lines.

## CHAPTER V.

TIME passed on. Within six months after the signing of the convention of Alexandria, which succeeded the battle of Marengo, the treaty of Luneville was concluded, by which the Adige was defined as the boundary between the French and Austrian dominions in Italy; the north-western states and provinces, while nominally independent, being to all intents and purposes incorporated with France.

The foresight of Harcourt had not deceived him in the anticipations he had formed relative to the reception by the First Consul of so distinguished and illustrious a person as the Count de Melzi. Ever alive to the policy of conciliating those he believed unfavourable towards his government, as well as resolute and determined, if not rigorous and unrelenting, in crushing open rebellion and resistance to its authority, his courteous demeanour to the old noble was of the most marked and distin-



guished character; and if he failed in attaching him to his interests, he at least had secured his respect and esteem, by delicate allusions to the unshaken and established loyalty he had ever manifested towards his former sovereign, concluding with the frank assurance that he confided wholly in his honour that he would do nothing to disturb the order of things as at present established.

As the brigade which Harcourt commanded had its headquarters at Milan, he became a constant visitor at the Melzi Palace, where, if other officers belonging to the French experienced only that courtesy and politeness which its high-bred proprietor would have extended even towards an enemy, in regard to himself, his presence was ever welcomed by every one in the household with the utmost warmth and cordiality. Old Franz, the German dragoon, now completely recovered, and once more established in his office as major-domo of the family, relaxed from his upright, stiff military bearing—which engendered the belief that he had swallowed the staff of his regimental standard—on Harcourt's making his appearance, his grave and solemn features absolutely diverging into a grin of recognition; an incident that afforded no slight degree of merriment to the Italian domestics,

who had rarely, if ever, previously witnessed such a phenomenon. The old *gouvernante* smirked and curtsied, pouring forth a voluble welcome ; while to the young Countess Virginia de Melzi, and her father, his presence was ever a source of the most unalloyed happiness and pleasure. Eventually, indeed, it became to the former a subject of interest, the extent and intenseness of which she was herself, perhaps, wholly unaware of, and which slumbered the deeper from Harcourt's bearing towards her, whilst expressive of the warmest and most friendly interest, partaking in its character more of the solicitude of an elderly relative closely and intimately connected with the family for a young and beautiful child, than any other feeling.

The youthful Signorina de Melzi was one of those bright creations of nature, the impression derived from which is not one of sudden and dazzling attraction, but rather of that feeling which, slowly and gradually created, only retains its hold the more deeply and earnestly upon the mind. She was of the middle height, with a figure formed in the finest proportions of nature's choicest mould, and which, though only in her seventeenth year, was developed in a full and rounded beauty, that scarcely accorded with features which seemed much more youthful in their feminine sweetness. They

were pale, but assimilated well with her large blue-grey eye, the characteristic of which, shaded by its long black lashes, was expressive rather of deep and melancholy reflection, than any other feeling, though, when lighted up, its tenor was altogether changed to one of archness and *naïveté*; while the heavy masses of dark-brown hair, braided simply over the smooth and polished forehead, imparted an additional charm to a countenance, eminently qualified to portray the gentleness and refinement of a highly-cultivated mind. She was an accomplished musician, an admirable artist, and, what was singular for an Italian lady at any time, but more particularly so at the period to which we allude, was a graceful and elegant rider; and many a sigh and glance of ardent admiration had followed her light figure, as it cantered gaily along the Corso upon her high-spirited Hungarian schimmel.

Such was the being with whom Harcourt was now constantly, almost daily, brought in contact. The carnival, with its gaieties, had passed away, the season of Lent had commenced, and each day generally witnessed him, when not engaged with military duties, by the side of the young countess, —in the morning when occupied with her drawing and music, in the evening accompanying her in her rides. The heart of the young Italian, with the

resistless impetuosity of her southern blood, was soon beyond her control, and irrevocably bestowed upon the being whom she had from the first regarded with veneration as the preserver of her father and herself, and whom, perhaps, her woman's nature was now piqued into regarding with a far deeper, more ardent feeling, from the circumstance that his own sentiments were apparently of so contrary a nature. Could it be that, owing to the very circumstance of their first acquaintance, which laid the foundation of her affection, it exercised an opposite feeling in regard to himself, engendering a spirit of honourable delicacy which prohibited him from encouraging sentiments, any success attending which, he felt might be conceded to him from a sense of gratitude and duty rather than any other motive? It was not wholly impossible, though, from Harcourt's uniformly frank, courteous, and cordial manner towards her, the supposition did not appear to be very probable.

But could the Count de Melzi be a stranger to what was passing in the mind of his child? or was he led to believe that Harcourt's age, double that of the signorina, was a sufficient guarantee against any such sentiment arising in the heart of either? The general impression was certainly not in favour of the former, and it was almost universally

mined upon,—foremost among which is the ordinance of the canonical law, which expressly declares that no woman can marry her father,—a rule that may possibly convey the further intimation, of its including those whose age would qualify them for the office?"

"A most paternal personage, truly,"—returned the gay Frenchman, surveying Harcourt's fine, manly figure, and then glancing upon his handsome features, which certainly, notwithstanding the very slightest tinge of grey in his dark waving hair, would have led a spectator to believe him many years younger than he really was,—“that carries off a prize from a host of suitors—and from me, Henri Claude de la Tour d'Auvergne, amongst the rest, love-maker general, and . . . *diable!* there goes our second trumpet, and I had almost forgotten I have a parade this morning.”

As his young companion hurried off, Harcourt, instead of resuming his intended route, remained for some minutes lost in thought, and then slowly and mechanically moved forward, his whole attitude being that of a person doubtful as to what course he should pursue. “Tut!” he at length exclaimed, peevishly, “I must be silly indeed to tolerate for an instant the impression this coxcomb's words would seem to have made upon me,

originating, no doubt, in some idle folly or conception of his own." And rousing himself from his reverie, he bent his steps in the direction of the Melzi Palace.

In an enclosed balcony of that splendid mansion, filled with the choicest plants and exotics, leading from a small morning *salon*, furnished in the gorgeous style of Louis Quatorze, about the very time the incident we have adverted to occurred, the young Countess de Melzi stood leaning thoughtfully against a marble pedestal which supported a Damascus rose-tree of extraordinary size and beauty. The expression of her pale but lovely features, the principal characteristic of which, as we have previously observed, was rather emblematic of melancholy than otherwise, had on the present occasion deepened into one of profound sadness. For a long, long period she remained thus, as if buried in a state of abstraction, the feelings derived from which were evidently of a painful, oppressive nature, since occasionally the striking depression which pervaded her countenance, became at times expressive of absolute wretchedness. As if struggling with the thoughts which recurred to her, she seemed at length involuntarily to murmur :—"He treats me as a child, and all that I can hope for, when every reminiscence of



myself has hereafter faded from his mind is, that in secret I may be permitted to revere him, to bless his name, and to pray to the Holy Virgin for his future prosperity and happiness."

A heavy tread, which had scarcely roused her from her reverie as it echoed through the room, now apprised her that she was not alone; and looking up, she beheld Harcourt standing within a few paces of her. A deep, burning flush suffused her countenance as he approached, and she seemed so apparently distressed and confused, that turning to a table near, on which lay scattered a portefeuille and drawing materials, he said, gaily;—

"You have not shown me your last study as you promised; this is it, I suppose. Why, what is this?—a military uniform, I declare; on my life, if it is not old Hubert! as stout, and as grim as his very self. What an admirable likeness, and how beautifully executed! How flattered the old fellow would be—and I shall make a point of telling him—if he knew that he formed one of the most prominent themes in so fair a lady's album!"

What can have caused this agitation in the young signorina? As Harcourt approached the table, and took up the drawing, a half-suppressed, wild cry escaped her, and she moved hastily forward, as if to prevent his doing so; on observ-

ing; however, how he was occupied, she stole to his side, and grasping at the portefeuille with trembling hands, she opened a drawer, and hastily thrust it within, giving an imploring glance to the astonished soldier, as, red and pale by turns, she seemed to beseech him to let it rest there!

Before Harcourt could recover from the surprise the incident occasioned, the tramp of a horse was heard beneath the window; and on looking out he saw an orderly dragoon, apparently the bearer of a despatch for himself, as he heard the trooper's voice inquiring for him, while almost immediately afterwards Franz entered with a large official letter, which he, at a glance, perceived came from the office of the Chef d'Etat-major.

"Save me from an *ordre de route*!" he said, smiling; as he broke the seal, and but little anticipating the effect those few words of his, so lightly spoken, produced upon his hearer, perused its contents, which, though short, were sufficient to elicit from him an exclamation of impatience and annoyance. As he hastily folded up the communication, and directed Franz to tell the orderly to bring round his horses to the palace as quickly as possible, he for the first time remarked the state of his young companion.

Pale, pale,—deathly pale, as the most exquisite



Carrara marble,—rooted to the spot,—motionless as if bereft of life and being, stood that fair and beautiful girl beside him, so deep was the anguish that seemed to crush and paralyse her entire frame! Shocked and alarmed, Harcourt sprang forward, and was about to shout for assistance, when, as if the movement had all at once turned her thoughts in a new channel, she convulsively pressed his arm to restrain him.

“Good heaven, signorina! Virginia, my sweet child,” exclaimed the astonished General, as he took the passive hand of the young girl, “what is the matter!”

“You are going,” she said, in a burst of uncontrollable agony.

“Going? no! what could lead you to entertain such a supposition? oh! this foolish letter, (as he followed the direction of her eye,) and I imagine my still sillier observation regarding it. Believe me it relates to a very simple, common-place occurrence, and if you have any doubts you may convince yourself. A party of our fellows having made somewhat too free with wine at a village a few miles from the city, have terminated their festivity in a brawl with the people, and as general-officer of the day, I have received an order from the Quartier-general, being directed by Berthier to

take a patrol from the outlying picket, and place the rioters in confinement. This is all, upon my honour.

She sunk into a seat, and covering her eyes with her hands, burst into a deep, prolonged, and convulsive passion of tears. Harcourt gazed upon her with feelings it would be difficult to describe: fear, bewilderment, hope, admiration, each in succession coursed rapidly through his mind. Did he narrowly scrutinize his own heart to ascertain if no lurking, latent feeling of a far higher, and yet stronger nature lingered there, unknown, or at least unavowed to himself, or which, up to this moment, had never previously been awakened? Perhaps he could not trust himself to ask the question; though, as he gazed upon the sweet and gentle being before him, words seemed to rise to his lips, to which he dared not give utterance, and which it cost him no slight inward struggle to suppress. As if actuated by some strong sense of high-minded and honourable determination, he at length was enabled to subdue his emotion; and though his voice faltered at first, and his powerful frame, for the moment, shook with the agitation he experienced, he gradually acquired firmness as he proceeded, and spoke words of gentleness and affectionate solicitude and kindness, which might

have proceeded from a father, or an elder brother, to a young and cherished sister. The tones of his voice in their deep, yet mellow accents, seemed to impress the beautiful Italian most strongly; not the less so, perhaps, that there was the slightest tinge of a feeling, mournful in its nature, which seemed to mingle in their utterance as they issued from his lips. It is not also impossible that, in spite of himself, they were not destitute of a tenderness he vainly strove to subdue, and which up to this period he had never used in speaking to her: but as he rose to depart, and pressed her hand within his own, a returning smile imparted to her features their usual expression of melancholy sweetness.

The door had closed upon him, and Harcourt found himself in the large entrance-hall of the palace, before he had in some measure recovered from the deep and thoughtful mood which came over him as he quitted the presence of the young Countess. He moved rapidly for a few paces, and then suddenly stopped; he turned upon his heel as if to retrace his footsteps, and again stepped forward, only once more to pause irresolute, as if doubtful what course to pursue amid the conflicting feelings which apparently occupied his mind at the moment. At once his resolution seemed to be taken. Glancing upon the official

packet in his hand, he strode to the balcony and looked into the street. The orderly had not yet returned, and muttering—"A few minutes can make but little difference; and if they did, a reprimand or a week's arrest will be cheaply purchased, in restoring tranquillity of mind to this angelic young creature: and situated as I am, as a man of honour, I am bound, whatever it costs myself, to bring this affair to a crisis; for too truly is it said, the most desperate certainty is far preferable to the living death and unceasing agony of constant suspense. Is the count in his room, Franz?" he inquired of the veteran who stood ready to attend him to the door,—a duty which he never permitted any of the domestics to assume but himself.

"Yes, Excellency," was the reply.

"Is he alone?"

"Assuredly, Excellency."

"Then announce my wish to speak to him immediately—or stay—I will follow you myself."

With the punctilio of military decorum, which prohibited, in his estimation, even the manifestation of anything like surprise at orders once issued, the old soldier squared himself, turned upon his heel with a precision a serjeant-major might have envied, and led the way to his master's apartment, the door of which he opened, announcing with due

sonorous intonation of voice, as if addressing his troop on parade, "Sua Eccellenza, il Generale Harcourt."

The Count was, as Franz had intimated, alone; and while he greeted his visitor with his usual frank and courteous welcome, he could not help uttering a slight exclamation of wonder at the traces of violent agitation which the latter studied in vain to conceal. As the door, however, closed upon them, Harcourt seated himself by the side of the old Count, and with a manly, straightforward candour, without the remotest approach to concealment, at once entered upon the object of his visit.

Half-an-hour—an hour had elapsed: Harcourt's charger paced impatiently at the gate of the palace, the orderly dragoon who held his bridle, occasionally giving vent to that wearied yawn of concentrated *ennui*, so emblematic of a Frenchman condemned to inactivity,—a state of existence to which he has a national and patriotic degree of abhorrence,—yet still the General did not make his appearance. At last he came forth, with light and buoyant tread, his countenance bearing the impression of one whose happiness was almost too great to bear. The count followed him into the hall, and as he clasped his hand in his own, he

laid the other upon his shoulder, and said with deep earnestness, "The noble and chivalrous conduct you have displayed on this occasion, though I should have expected no less from all that I have seen or heard regarding you, would alone have enlisted my sympathy in your favour, even if other inducements had been wanting in the never-to-be-forgotten service rendered to myself and child; and you will excuse my frankness in mentioning in reference to your early history, that if the pride of race might have rendered me reluctant to bestow the hand of my daughter upon one who, however of ancient lineage, was yet a wanderer without home or kindred, in a land at war with his own country, the same reason would now lead me to rejoice that it existed, from the further insight it has enabled me to obtain into the heart and mind of one, to whom I may with equal pride and pleasure confide the happiness of my child."

Harcourt wrung the hand of the old noble almost convulsively, as if his voice denied him the power of giving utterance to the burst of grateful feeling which pervaded him; then, darting from the house, he sprang into his saddle, and rode full gallop to where his orders had directed him to proceed.

The evening had closed in, and the young

Countess sat alone in the room which had witnessed her interview with Harcourt in the morning. He had not yet returned from the service which had occupied him, though her father had carelessly intimated that he would be with them again in the evening. Kind and affectionate as that father had ever been towards her, there had been a tenderness and caressing endearment on his part when speaking to her throughout the day, which she could not fail to remark, and though entirely ignorant of what it originated in, it did not fail to soothe and alleviate the agitation her mind had sustained. The piano lay open before her, but its chords were untouched, and though seated upon a sofa with a volume of Metastasio in her hand, it was evident its pages, in all their mellifluous sweetness, did not form the object which so completely engrossed her thoughts. Suddenly the tramp of a horse was heard; her heart beat quickly, the blood rushed in a torrent over her countenance, and then subsided, leaving it yet paler than before; in another moment Harcourt entered the apartment. The young girl scarcely dared to lift her eyes as he approached and seated himself by her side. She trembled violently as he took her hand; and yet she had never done so before! Was it in the subdued and earnest expression she had observed

upon his features—in the timid glance she had turned upon him; that she divined with a woman's instinct the nature of what he was about to communicate to her? She tried to speak, but her voice failed her, and she dared not encounter that fixed and steadfast gaze her heart told her was fixed upon her.

“Virginia,” said Harcourt, softly, and his words seemed replete with deep, even saddened feeling, “shall I place you in the situation of a presiding genius of the confessional, while I beg your attention to a history relative to—to one, whose vicissitudes in life will, I feel, at least secure some degree of interest and compassion in that gentle mind. In early life, a being,—almost the last of an ancient name and lineage,—but of impoverished fortunes, had his prospects of the future blighted by an involuntary homicide, committed under circumstances of absolute self-defence. His adversary, however, was as rich and powerful as *he* was poor and friendless; and he was compelled to endure a life of exile, poverty, and misery, or incur the risk of an unjust and ignominious end. He sought for refuge in a land which had risen against its blood-stained rulers, and there chance directed him to the notice of the wonderful being whose name and renown now fills the whole of



Europe, and who was destined to restore order to his distracted country by crushing anarchy and misrule beneath his iron sway. With generous kindness he sympathised with the unfortunate exile, and attached him to his fortunes. Under his auspicious friendship he soon rose to rank and distinction; and, though serving in the ranks arrayed in more than common hostility against the government and country to which he owed allegiance, it was ever understood that he should never be called upon to serve against those possessing the ties of blood and kindred with himself.

“Years passed on: the exile had acquired fame and distinction in the army of his adopted land; he bore a name which ranked amongst the most illustrious in its annals; and a trivial incident having led to his introduction to a high and distinguished family, he eventually became a welcome and honoured guest within its domestic circle. Circumstances suddenly occurred, which engendered the belief in his mind that his further presence there might be ultimately the cause of his repaying, though involuntarily, the generous friendship and warm-hearted hospitality extended towards him, by what would create only bitterness and unhappiness in return. As a man of honour there was but one course open to him; and however severe and painful

to himself that course must be, he at once resolutely determined upon adopting it, by absenting himself from the scene; though, previous to doing so, he deemed it only just to the head of the family from which he had received so much kindness, as well as to himself, that he should seek an interview to explain the motives of the line of conduct necessity forced upon him, lest it should be supposed he had repaid his open-hearted friendship with ingratitude and rudeness.

“He sought that truly excellent and honoured father, that high-minded and noble gentleman, and openly, without the least reserve, explained everything to him,—detailed every circumstance connected with his early history,—undeceived him as to his being French, by either birth or name,—gave a clear and true account of his present position and future uncertain fortunes,—and finally concluded by telling him why he must hereafter absent himself from his hospitable dwelling, till he could make arrangements for being transferred to another division of the army, far away from the dangerous attraction which enchained him. What was the course that noble father pursued? He was himself one of the truest and most gallant soldiers that ever carried a standard into an enemy’s ranks; and instead of coldly repelling the being who destitute of rank

and fortune, had involuntarily gained his child's affection,—returning, as many would have thought, his warm hospitality and cordial welcome with ingratitude and injury,—he listened, with generous sympathy, to the forlorn exile's narrative, and on its termination, warmly praising what he termed the spirit of honourable feeling which had actuated him throughout, he declared that his child's happiness was the first consideration in life with him,—that though he might have felt some reluctance to have bestowed her upon a person of unknown name and fortune, that that objection had been removed in the fame and distinction he had acquired for himself, and—and—if she had bestowed her young affections upon one in every way so deserving, *his* consent should not be withheld from sanctioning her choice. Virginia, my narrative is told; the exile stands before you! my own history is the one I have depicted; and now, one single word from you either renders me the happiest of men, or sends me to the army in Germany,—there to cherish to the end of existence the brightest though briefest period of happiness it has known."

It would be difficult to describe the varied emotions with which the agitated girl had listened to this long and unexpected declaration. When

Harcourt first commenced speaking, astonishment, not unmingled with perplexity, was the pervading feeling she experienced. As he continued, a thrilling interest seemed to be imparted by the deep, clear, yet occasionally half-broken tones in which his narrative proceeded; as it, however, approached towards a conclusion, its full meaning flashed at once upon her mind; and on its termination, when in low yet fervent accents he revealed his intense and devoted love and affection, she convulsively clasped his arm, and bending her face upon her hands, burst into a passionate flood of tears. Suddenly lifting her glowing countenance, now radiant with joy and happiness, to his, she drew the General to the table where she usually sat when occupied with her pencil and painting, and throwing open the drawer she had so eagerly closed in the morning, she took out the portefeuille, and on opening it, drew forth from beneath the picture of the veteran Sergeant Hubert, a second portrait, much more exquisitely and highly finished, and placing it in her lover's hands, as a deep and burning blush crimsoned her features, she said with archness, "Let this be my answer; each day, each hour it has been my greatest, I may say my only source of happiness, almost from the moment when we first met."

Harcourt glanced upon the drawing, which was a full-length likeness of himself, perfect in its resemblance, representing him in his cuirassier uniform, and standing beside his favourite charger, which was no less faithfully portrayed. He clasped her to his heart, and sealed his acknowledgment upon those rich and glowing lips.

"Father and benefactor," said Harcourt, reverentially, the same evening, to the Count, "you have bestowed upon me the brightest of heaven's blessings, for which let my future life thank you in my devoted affection to her, and more than filial reverence to yourself."

Upon a bright and sunny morning, about two months afterwards, a gay and brilliant, though not very numerous assemblage were met together in the Melzi Palace, to celebrate the marriage of one of the fairest flowers that had ever sprung from that noble and illustrious house. The guests were principally Italian, of the first families of the Milanese, mingled with a small number of French, selected from Harcourt's most intimate friends and brother officers, foremost among whom was the young Count de la Tour d'Auvergne, who acted as bridegroom's man upon the occasion, and who, attired in his rich hussar uniform, by his gaiety and high spirits effectually dispelled all traces of the nervous

anxiety and solicitude which first had somewhat clouded Harcourt's handsome and manly features; and all was smiling serenity within the saloon, when the bride, leaning upon the arm of her father, and attended by her bridesmaids, entered upon the scene.

There was a momentary hushed stillness of breathless admiration, as the parting of the *portières*\* gave entrance to what appeared a vision of such lustrous and wondrous beauty, and then, as if spontaneously, burst forth a loud, prolonged, and general murmur of applause. It was, indeed, almost impossible to imagine a more perfect picture of unparalleled loveliness, rendered the more striking by the rich and costly simplicity of her bridal costume, and a slight flush, which imparted additional lustre to her exquisitely beautiful features.

The party now moved forward through the large entrance-hall, and passed into the private chapel of the palace. There, at its altar, Harcourt received the hand of that young, loving, and devoted being, which placed in his, never for an instant relaxed its gentle grasp upon that of her

\* In the saloons of the splendid palaces and spacious mansions of northern Italy, the doors are usually hung with rich draperies, somewhat similar to the Oriental purdah.

affianced husband, towards whom her countenance was ever turned with looks radiant with tenderness and affection; and while the strong man's voice occasionally shook with some degree of emotion during the ceremony, her tones, though low and soft, were clear, calm, and distinct. The bright sunshine streamed through the richly-stained windows of the holy edifice,—the glorious azure-tinted sky of an Italian spring was visible without,—all seemed expressive of present and continued joy and happiness. But, how often is it, that the calmest sunset is but the precursor of the midnight tempest,—the glowing brightness of to-day, but the forerunner of the raging storm of the morrow,—fit emblems, in every respect, of the vicissitudes and fitful, changing destinies that are ever daily, nay hourly, occurring in the tide of human life as it flows onward towards its close!

## CHAPTER VI.

THE short-lived peace, or rather armed truce, of Amiens had taken place, affording some degree of repose to Europe, worn out by the slaughter, distractions and miseries occasioned by the wars of the nine years previous. France had won as much glory from the struggle as her adversaries had lost; since, while the only advantage the latter attained on its conclusion, was the final arrestation of the revolutionary Propaganda, which at one time threatened the subversion of every landmark that defined the boundaries of civilization and social order; the former had risen to a state of power and grandeur, that even the ambition of Louis Quatorze never could have attempted, and which singularly contrasted with her position at the commencement of the contest, when her very existence as a nation was threatened; with an ill-fed, starving, and badly disciplined army, opposed to the highly-trained and well-organized legions of



her enemies ;—with a successful invader occupying the most commanding points on her frontier, and her capital open to his march, and subsequent capture, had it only been attempted ;—with the entire country distracted and torn by party convulsions, —the guillotine streaming with the blood of her bravest and noblest ;—with an impoverished population, and bankrupt exchequer ;—all presenting a picture of threatened anarchy, ruin, desolation, and misery, that seemed only the more certain and irretrievable the longer it was postponed.

And yet what had the commanding genius of one single mind alone effected, not merely in rescuing France from the gulf into which she appeared to be inevitably falling, but in placing her at her present pinnacle of unparalleled greatness ? With her frontier extended to the Rhine ; encircled by numerous states, nominally allied to her, but in reality the vassals of her will and power ; with credit restored, and her finances in a state of flourishing prosperity ; La Vendée pacified, and every appearance of anarchy crushed and subdued by an iron hand ;—all wore the semblance of peace and happiness : and if any vague feeling arose, questioning the strength of its duration, it was discarded, and dismissed as an augur of evil, originating solely in a distempered mind ; all being

determined wholly to forget every reminiscence relative to past misery and suffering, and to regard the present prospect as the forerunner only of a prolonged and unbroken period of tranquillity, destined, under a vigorous government, to develop the resources of the country, and advance its prosperity.

The whole of France, and particularly the capital, was in an absolute delirium of joy and triumph. For several nights in succession the entire city, the theatres, the public buildings, were brilliantly illuminated. Strangers from all parts of Europe, particularly the English, poured into Paris, where a succession of gorgeous fêtes and reviews, presided over by the First Consul, or at which he attended, imparted additional éclat to the gaieties and festivities everywhere prevalent.

The morning of the 18th January, 1802, had been appointed for one of the grandest scenes of military display that had yet occurred since the proclamation of the peace, being a review by the head of the government in person, of his splendid Consular Guard, joined to the whole of the troops off duty quartered in the city and round the environs of Paris. The day was highly propitious for such an event, being bright and clear, while a hoar-frost which had set in during the night, and

which, notwithstanding the sunshine, was still visible upon the branches of the trees, had hardened the ground, and rendered it peculiarly favourable for the manœuvres of the heavy masses in their various movements throughout the day.

The ground appointed for the spectacle was the Place du Carrousel; and long before the hour fixed for the appearance of the First Consul, almost simultaneously indeed with the arrival of the troops as they marched in, and took up their respective positions, every spot available for the purpose was crowded with a triple line of carriages and equipages of every kind, gay equestrians, and a dense mass of human heads, that far and wide seemed an absolute ocean of moving life. The strictest order prevailed, mingled however with that exuberant gaiety and good humour, which so invariably marks the Parisian populace on a festive occasion, and which at the present moment found vent in alternate admiration, and critical remarks upon the military, as the various corps and regiments reached their several destinations.

"Parbleu!" said a butcher of the Faubourg Saint Antoine, "regardez donc, voilà les hussars de Murat, comme ils sont superbes!" as he pointed to a division of light cavalry, which at this moment arrived, and swept across the Place at a hand

gallop, and by their gay and brilliant appearance, certainly seemed to merit the encomium bestowed.

"Et ceux-ci sont les dragons de Kellerman," shouted a second; "ce brave General!"

"Encore l'artillerie volant de Druot!" exclaimed a third; "regardez ces chevaux, comme ils sont magnifiques. Ah! ils ont rendus de grands services à Marengo."

"Les Cuirassiers de Milhaud!" repeated several voices at once; and with their burnished breast-plates and helmets glittering in the sun, that magnificent body of soldiery marched upon the ground, their presence eliciting a general burst of admiration. In this manner the troops continued to arrive and form up in dense massive columns, when there suddenly arose throughout the entire crowd a prolonged murmur of applause, mingled with cries of "La Garde! la Garde!" and in the midst of a deafening shout of enthusiasm, these old warriors moved forward to their appointed position. Their appearance certainly formed a singular contrast to the vivacity which almost universally distinguished the rest of the infantry. Grim, solemn, and dignified, they advanced at the same slow and measured step with which they had marched through the sanguinary carnage of the memorable field of Marengo, as if both scenes were alike to them, and

deeming that anything that seemed characteristic of levity or persiflage, or that disturbed the solidity or precision of their ranks, was a dereliction of dignity not to be tolerated for an instant.

Almost immediately following their arrival, there appeared in the distance a forest of waving plumes, the prelude to the advance of a body of horsemen, who, as they approached the centre of the long array of the serried columns, were received by the crash of the presented arms of the infantry, and the flash of the sword-blades of the cavalry, as they flew from their scabbards, gleaming high in the air, mingled with the strains of military music,—thus forming the general salute, which announced the presence of the First Consul, surrounded by his brilliant staff, and followed by those whose names and reputations then formed a theme for present, as they afterwards became subjects for future history. Accompanied however, as he was, by the brave, the gallant, and the noble, the eyes of all amid the spectators, particularly among the strangers, were fixed upon that still young and extraordinary man, the presiding genius of the scene, who—simply attired in his plain blue frock, and well-known plumeless tri-cornered hat, as if in studied contrast to the brilliant and gorgeous uniforms, which glittered around him—from

the rank of a subaltern officer of artillery, had attained an extent of power and despotic rule which no French sovereign had ever reached since the period of Charlemagne.

Almost immediately on the First Consul's arrival the troops commenced defiling past, the cavalry taking the lead, followed by the infantry, the line of columns being closed by the artillery.

"Who is that young and beautiful creature upon the grey horse, I wonder?" said one of the spectators, who from his bearing and general appearance was evidently an Englishman, even if the observation he had uttered in his own native tongue had not already been proof sufficient.

"Monsieur a raison," said a French gentleman standing near, who seemed perfectly to understand the allusion, and who now taking off his hat, addressed the stranger with the utmost politeness. "The lady in question is indeed an angel of loveliness,—she is Madame la Générale d'Harcourt, and that officer now approaching, is her husband."

He pointed, as he spoke, towards a fine, powerful, athletic-looking man, a general-officer commanding a brigade of cuirassiers, who rode at their head as they passed in review before the First Consul.



"He is a noble-looking fellow," replied the Englishman, smiling, "and well fitted to lead the gallant body he commands. By heaven!" he added, interrupting himself, "the lady's horse is growing very restive; I hope he will not prove too much for her."

"Monsieur need be under no apprehension," said the courteous Frenchman; "Madame la Générale is a perfect and accomplished horsewoman."

"So she appears," returned the Englishman, gazing upon the beautiful equestrian with unequivocal admiration, as she reined, and managed her restless steed with a firm, yet light and skilful hand, her countenance radiant with smiles; "but still, in a scene like the present, amid so much uproar and confusion, it would be more prudent if she were to dismount: however, she seems to have subdued him at last, the animal is perfectly quiet now, and I only hope he will remain so."

The whole of the troops had now marched past, and a series of manœuvres had commenced. Several charges of cavalry had occurred, but the whole of this force was subsequently withdrawn to the rear, with the exception of a cloud of light skirmishers and several batteries of horse-artillery, which suddenly opened a furious fire, as if for the purpose of covering and concealing some movement

in their rear, the hidden nature of which very quickly became revealed, as, closing their ranks to their right and left, and then wheeling round the flanks, they discovered a line of bristling and serried bayonets behind them, from the ranks of which volley after volley was poured in quick and rapid succession. All at once loud cries of fear and horror arose, which, unheard at first, as the roll of the drums beat the signal to discontinue firing, now rang upon the ear of the assembled multitude with a frightful degree of distinctness ; and as the smoke cleared away, it was observed that the horse of a lady had taken fright, and was dashing with fearful and headlong violence across the plain, every effort to arrest the animal's progress seeming only apparently to madden him the more. It was the beautiful Madame Harcourt, and the fears expressed by the English spectator we have previously adverted to, became unfortunately but too quickly verified, as scarcely had the firing commenced, before her horse became unusually violent and restless, and at length apparently rendered ungovernable by terror, he sprang into the air with a tremendous bound, and

- rushed forward with frightful velocity, every exertion on the part of his rider to control or restrain him seeming only to goad him to still greater frenzy !



The young girl retained her seat, but it was too soon painfully evident that her slight and delicate frame would eventually be wholly unequal to maintain it from absolute physical exhaustion. All throughout that vast throng within view of what was passing experienced a sickening sensation of agonized horror, as they felt their gaze fascinated, riveted upon the frightful spectacle before them, which, long as it has been in its description, was in reality the work of a few seconds only. Suddenly there was a hushed, compressed, stifled murmur among the crowd, a sound expressive of that inward feeling, when suspense has risen to a pitch too intolerable to be borne, the cause of which was quickly visible in the appearance of a long, low, stone wall, surmounted with thick, strong, iron pailings, towards which the maddened animal directed its steps, without the slightest diminution of its frantic speed, and against which both horse and rider must inevitably be dashed, should the latter not succeed in turning him from his course.

Many closed their eyes, others held their hands tightly compressed to their brows as if to exclude the vision of what they dared not contemplate, and in trembling anxiety awaited the result. There was heard a rushing sound, a half-stifled, ye

piercing shriek, a crash, and then a heavy fall; almost simultaneously with which arose exclamations of horror, mingled with deep groans of agony and anguish! Those who were nearest among the spectators had rushed forward on the instant, but almost immediately recoiled, paralysed with the hideous spectacle that met their view. The horse lay stretched upon the ground; the stone basement, the iron paling, all around was covered with scattered blood and brains, the animal's skull having been dashed to atoms from the force of the concussion with which he had rushed against the obstacle which opposed his progress; and she—she so late resplendent in all her radiant loveliness and beauty, so recently replete with life, health, and energy—oh, merciful Creator! can it be that this hideous, shapeless, mangled mass of senseless clay, scarcely bearing the remotest vestige of resemblance to the form of our common humanity, is all that remains of that bright and glorious being, who but a few short minutes previously shone forth one of the choicest creations of nature's most exquisite mould and beauty?

Suddenly the crowd parted, giving way right and left to a horseman who dashed full speed among them. He wore the rich uniform of a

general officer of cuirassiers, his helmet had fallen from him, and as he rode wildly, madly through the throng, murmurs of deep sympathy and compassion were heard on every side! In a succession of bounds he reached the spot where lay the mangled remains of her he had so deeply, devotedly loved, and reining up the animal he bestrode with a fierceness that brought him upon his haunches, and with a force which almost caused him to sink under him, he sprang from his saddle, and clasping the corpse in his arms, gazed for a few moments in vacant bewildered stupor upon the scene of death before him!

While with one arm he encircled the body, he raised the other towards heaven, giving utterance to a few muttered, unintelligible sounds; then he passed his hand across his brow, as if striving to recollect the real nature of the scene before him, or as if endeavouring to rouse himself from some hideous phantasy which oppressed him, and then, as if the terrible reality of all that had occurred had only now forced itself in all its ghastly and frightful truth upon his mind, he sunk upon the earth with a cry, which, partaking in its character of something between a yell and a scream, was of so utterly unearthly a nature, that not only those around, but all who heard it, felt the blood

within their veins freeze with sickening horror! They raised him from the ground, but in that wild, heart-broken cry, the tendons of the brain had snapped, reason had fled, and the gallant soldier, the cool, collected, and able commander, in that minute had become a fierce, raging, howling maniac; and such was his prodigious strength, that it required some ten or twelve of the most powerful men among the soldiery to master him.

"Remove him," said the deep, low, stern voice of one who had approached, and was gazing upon the scene; "remove him at once, and let him be carefully attended to; but the greatest blessing his sincerest friends could wish to happen, would be either that reason should never again dawn upon his mind, or that death would release him from what must hereafter prove to him a life of endless misery."

It was the First Consul who spoke, and if those around him observed that no tear or any external sign of visible emotion marked his features on this tragical termination of the career of one of his most trusted, distinguished, and devoted adherents, others, more far-seeing, could trace in the additional paleness of those pallid features, and the subdued and saddened expression of the resolute, stern eye, that deep-seated and profound grief, which his pride would not permit him to exhibit before the world.

## PART THE THIRD.

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IN one of those openings caused by the sea, upon the burning coast of Western Africa, and about half a mile from the entrance, lay a ship's boat fastened to the shore. The spot upon which our narrative now reopens, was as unpromising and repulsive in its nature as could well be imagined. The low, swampy beach, overspread with the densest, closest jungle, exhibited nothing but thick heavy black mud, teeming with the rank vegetation of the Tropics; the air in its close and fetid atmosphere was pregnant with fever, malaria, and every description of malignant disorder, and the entire scene, indeed, expressive in every characteristic of its being altogether the abode of wild beasts, or of human beings still more remarkable for their ferocious cruelty; the more particularly, since the mouth of the river lay so extremely low, and was so completely excluded from view till

almost close to the entrance, that it might well have been questioned if the foot of man had ever trod within its precincts, but for the object we have already adverted to, and which, evidently belonging to the rakish and suspicious-looking schooner which lay at anchor close in shore, afforded convincing proof that the spot was occasionally the haunt of those even yet worse in their nature than the brutes of the forest.

The vessel, indeed, was one of that class which could not fail to inspire with terror and misgiving any unfortunate merchantman, whose evil destiny led to her crossing its route with no protective convoy near. Privateer, slaver, pirate—it was each in succession as occasion offered, and from whose murderous assault and pillage no flag or nation was ever under any circumstances secure. As if to complete the sinister character of the picture we have endeavoured to describe, in a cleared space within the dense jungle, some two hundred yards from the shore, was a group of three ruffianly-looking men, (for whose benefit, perhaps, a gibbet was still wanting to perfect the nature of the scene,) two of whom were seated on the ground occupied with a dirty and almost illegible pack of cards at the favourite game of *monté*, while the third reclined beside them listlessly, smoking a cigar.



Of the two former, one was evidently an Englishman; and that he had been very successful in their gambling occupation, was apparent not only from the pile of dollars and crusados which lay before him, and the few pieces that remained to his adversary—a sullen, swarthy, black-bearded Spaniard—but from the jeering taunts and remarks he occasionally indulged in on his companion's ill-fortune, which evidently stung deeply, from the red glare of ferocious passion which occasionally flashed from the fellow's large blood-shot eyes.

Suddenly the latter swept together all the money that he still retained, as if determined to risk the whole upon a single stake, and exclaimed in a voice which, in its forced composure, but deep and hellish passion, resembled the growl of a wild beast, "*Hagame usted la gracia de despacharme luego—lo agradeceré mucho.*" (Do me the favour to finish me at once, and you will greatly oblige me.)

"*De muy buena gana,*" (Oh! certainly,—very willingly,) was the sneering reply; but ere the ruffians could recommence their game, the report of a gun boomed sullenly over the water, while almost immediately a young lad issued from an adjoining thicket, calling out in English, "Jackson!—Perez!—José!—we must on board immediately; I have searched everywhere without success, and he must

either have flung himself into the river, in one of his mad fits, or have wandered into the forest, and been lost; but whatever has happened to him, we can wait no longer, as the land-breeze has already set in, and Don Martin wishes to make a good offing before nightfall."

"Esperad un poco," said the black-bearded ruffian eagerly. "Esta usted muy de prisa" (Wait a little, you're in a violent hurry.)

"And you would like a few minutes more to be left without a real;—but you heard the captain's orders as well as myself, and the signal just now made; so lest we miss the Dutchman through your tardiness, here's your best answer;" and catching up the cards, he flung them into the adjoining bushes, a roar of laughter from the others following the action.

"C—jo!— Demonio!" yelled the ruffian, giving way to his long repressed fury, and exulting, perhaps, in the supposition, that he had found an object on which it could be vented in safety, as, drawing his long knife, he rushed at the youth, who however dexterously eluded his grasp, and darting away, seemed to enjoy the storm of impotent rage he had raised, and the abortive attempts of the pirate to catch hold of him. His mirth had, however, well nigh received a fatal



termination; for while taunting his pursuer with his mocking laugh, and maddening him to renewed exertion, his foot suddenly caught in one of the numerous creepers trailing upon the ground, when he stumbled and fell. In the next instant he was in the grasp of his enemy, and before either of the others (who had been enjoying the chase to the utmost, hallooing on their comrade with mock encouragement when, jaded and exhausted, his efforts flagged) could interfere, the flash of the cuchillo gleamed aloft, and the boy's fate seemed certain, when a hand was stretched forth from a neighbouring thicket, and a powerful grasp seized the intended assassin's wrist; in the next moment, a tall, unearthly-looking figure stepped out, and with a wild laugh, actually whirling the ruffian around him,—such was his prodigious strength—hurled him against the trunk of a tree, where he lay stunned and senseless.

The sight of this terrible apparition produced an extraordinary effect upon the spectators, as springing to their feet, and followed by the boy, one and all, leaving their wounded messmate to whatever fate might befall him, rushed from the spot in all the terror of superstitious dread, exclaiming, “Mad Ned, by the Lord, and in one of his worst humours!”

The being who had thus unexpectedly appeared, and whose presence had preserved the young lad's life, only to be expiated, perhaps, at some future period upon the gallows, was certainly one calculated under any circumstances to discompose the nerves even of the hardiest. He was considerably above the usual height, and had the example been wanting we have already narrated, was evidently a person possessed of immense bodily strength and muscular power. A mass of dark iron-grey hair, with a thick, curling beard, altogether concealed his features, with the exception of the large, lustrous, glaring eyes, which gleaming from the mask which enshrouded them, like two orbs of absolute fire, afforded proof that the reason of the unhappy man was clouded, if not altogether banished from its throne. He was attired in the common red shirt, straw hat, and coarse trousers of a seaman, and round his neck was suspended by a silken cord what appeared to be a book contained in a canvas bag.

Who or what this unfortunate man was, none of the lawless crew with whom he was associated ever could divine. He had come on board one evening at the Cape de Verds (where he had been left by a Danish merchantman, who had been driven there by stress of weather, on her voyage

from Rochefort to the Brazils), and without any question or inquiry, had constituted himself one of the crew. The ruffians among whom he was thrown were seldom in the habit of asking information regarding those who joined them; but there was something in the new comer's appearance that seemed irresistibly to attract their attention towards him, the more so that it was accompanied by a degree of superstitious awe and dread,—the only feeling at all likely to impress their ferocious and blood-stained minds. The only language he either could, or would speak, in the few words he exchanged with them, was not Spanish, but one which bore a close affinity to it, and which the crew declared to be Italian, though it subsequently appeared he seemed thoroughly to understand both French and English. At this period the vessel was refitting for their present cruise, and it was quickly evident that whatever the course of life of the new comer had previously been, he was no seaman. His powerful athletic figure, however, and outcast appearance,—the latter, in their estimation, the consequence, in all probability, of some unusually heinous crime,—rendered him a welcome addition to the pirate band, the more so, that the following day a large body of negroes at one of the slave dépôts having risen upon a part of the crew,

the whole party were saved by his vast personal strength, and reckless desperate courage.

On getting out to sea, however, one trait connected with their recently-joined messmate, was the cause of the greatest fear and consternation among the rest of the lawless band, and this was the discovery that he was subject to occasional fits of mental aberration, during the prevalence of which no one dared to come near him, as once when an attempt was made to surround him for the purpose of preventing his committing any injury, the strongest of the crew were like infants in his grasp ; for, laying hold of them in succession, he dashed them bruised and senseless against the masts and bulwarks of the vessel. The pirate horde would very quickly have settled the question by flinging him overboard, had they not been withheld by superstitious terror, and the circumstance that if left to himself, however wild his ravings were, he made no attempt at violence towards any one, but would leave the deck, and retiring to some part of the vessel where he was alone, would open the canvas covering that hung round his neck, gaze upon what it contained, and apparently address it in the long and incoherent strain of a maddened, wandering intellect. But did curiosity, or some other motive, never induce any among that mur-

derous and remorseless set to endeavour to ascertain by force, or stealth, what was the object that thus could move this unhappy being? The question is easily answered. Among men, even the most debased and worthless, is usually found a latent feeling by which some hold or control is maintained over their excesses, and on the present occasion the most reckless and fearless among the wretches we have depicted, would have shrunk with terror from making the attempt. The scum and refuse of the world, blood-stained, pitiless, and remorseless as they were, "whose hand was against every man, and every man's against them,"—superstition possessed that curb over their evil passions, they would have laughed to scorn if asserted by either religion or principle.

The ruffians had fled, leaving their wounded companion still senseless, and bleeding profusely from a wound in the head, alone with the maniac. But, as if satisfied with the chastisement he had already inflicted, the latter attempted no further injury towards him; his savage mood subsided into an apparently listless apathy, or inert reverie, and turning from the spot, he moved away as if mechanically, and was soon lost to view in the thick and dense forest around. The shades of evening now began to fall; a second, and a third time, the

signal gun boomed over the waters, and voices were heard, calling to him in the distance; but still, as if regardless of both, he wandered onward—onward—onward yet. He had now reached the sea-shore, and there, on its long line of sandy beach, stood that forlorn and outcast being, alone, —alone, with not a living soul near, gazing on the wide and dreary expanse of waters before him.

Night had closed in, but still he moved not: the moon rose in all the glorious refulgence of the tropics, but he yet stood, with his eyes fixed in vacant and dreamy rumination upon that broad ocean, the waves of which dashed in sullen roar at his feet. The wild and frenzied aspect which had previously marked his features, had given way to one of profound melancholy, accompanied with that lustreless expression in the eye, which indicated the softer feelings prevalent in his wandering mind.

A sense of physical fatigue, or, more probably, the intense stillness around him, at length seemed to produce a change in his frame, as he threw himself upon the ground—his glance, in its stolid and immoveable nature, being fixed upon the bright, clear blue firmament, glittering with its innumerable stars above! Long he lay thus, till slumber, deep, heavy, and continued, gradually stole over



him. It was almost certain death to sleep in that fetid, baleful atmosphere; but his breathing, prolonged and regular, seemed to defy its influence: the howl of the wild beasts of the forest behind was heard, in close vicinity to where he lay; but, as if he bore a charmed life, they came not near him, and he remained buried in that profound torpor, the result alike of bodily exhaustion, and wretchedness of mind.

But oh! who—who, among the ranks of that renowned soldiery that he, within a few short fleeting years, commanded—who, amid those gay and brilliant circles he then moved in as one of their brightest ornaments,—who that then regarded him as the happy and successful victor in a career that had crowned him with rank, wealth, and beauty,—who, at this moment, could have recognised the gallant and distinguished soldier—the marked favourite of the most powerful ruler of continental Europe—the fortunate and envied lover—in the wretched, miserable, outcast, and maniac being before him?

And for hours he slumbered thus, in all the tranquillity of the deep sleep of childhood, on that dangerous spot. But hush! he awakens.—No! some few muttered words only hover upon his lips, and in his dreams he is far away, amidst other scenes,

or recurring to that past, which, in its events and incidents, for the moment obliterates all present sense of hopeless wretchedness! He is silent again, and heavier, deeper than before his slumber continues;—the hand of Mercy is extended towards him, and there passes that within him which, ere many hours are fled, will produce a crisis in his fate! Then there arose to his view visions of his early life. He was once more a youth—the old Rock stood before him, the bright array of scarlet uniforms, the morning parade, and he was again among his gay and light-hearted comrades. The scene changed, and he was gazing upon the sanguinary conflict at Toulon; he heard the shrieks of the victims as they were led to the guillotine—the boom of the guns, as they executed the mitrail-lades, rang upon his ear: and then they also passed away, and he stood by the side of that young chief-tain whom he had saved! Anon, a third view rose before him, and he was shouting on his men in the fierce and glorious conflict of Marengo: but it faded from his sight, and he stood in a well-known scene in the rich and fertile plains of Lombardy, looking anxiously around as if he expected the presence of some deeply-loved and cherished object near him; but beyond that, his troubled brain could proceed no further. Then



occurred some dreadful, unforeseen calamity, the nature of which he could not, strive as he would, altogether tell; and after that, for a long, long while, all was darkness—darkness conjoined with deep and unfathomable mystery—from which emanated the shuddering picture of raging madness, in its worst and most frenzied form; of a human being—human alone in form—chained and manacled like a wild beast, and the object of horror and dread even to his keepers. There came a period of change in his disorder, and frantic violence had given way to apparent idiotic imbecility, the result of that deeply laid, consummate cunning, which so often manifests itself in similar cases; when the unhappy victim has some fixed determination in view, and which, in this instance, eventually lulling the suspicions of those who had charge of him, and rendering them less watchful, at length enabled him to effect his escape, and make his way to the sea-coast—a measure he had accomplished by travelling by night only, through bye-roads and unfrequented paths. Then recurred his secreting himself on board the foreign vessel, and not making his appearance till she was well out at sea, to the dismay and terror of the crew—their leaving him, either through accident or design, at the Cape de Verds, and his subsequently joining

the ruffianly horde with whom he had so recently been associated.

For some time after this, all was again blank ; and then—then he remembered the exact spot where he was at present sleeping. Suddenly the blue firmament above him seemed to open,—voices of soft music apparently filled the air, and slowly—slowly a bright vision, clothed in white, appeared to descend to the earth towards him. He gazed in breathless awe and wonder upon the seraph being who approached him, an angelic smile upon whose heavenly features seemed to beam with love and tenderness, as it neared the hapless wanderer, from whom there burst forth exclamations of mingled joyful and saddened recognition. The figure continued to hover near him, without touching the earth, and words of holy comfort and consolation issued from its lips, which, in their solemn earnestness and loving fervour, appeared like balm poured upon the crushed and wounded spirit of him to whom they were addressed. He was gazing upon that marvellous beauty, now enshrined in a dazzling halo of glory and brightness, when the vision stooped, and laid its hand upon his burning brow ; from the touch it seemed as if instantaneously all fever at once passed away, and its calm and soothing influence to communicate

a new and refreshing spirit throughout his whole frame. He stretched forth his arms, as if to clasp the heavenly being beside him to his heart, but which appeared to recede from his touch, though, as it gradually faded from his sight, that sweet and seraph smile illuminated its features, in their radiant brightness, to more perfect beauty, as, pointing to the azure and glittering sky above, it seemed to intimate by the action that there they would hereafter meet again.

He started up and awoke. Daylight was dawning in the distant horizon; the sea breeze had set in, imparting a delicious coolness to the morning air; and as the events of the past night had been fixed indelibly upon his memory, he felt, indeed, he was an altered being;—reason was restored; and though he endured the agonizing misery, derived from all that he had lost and suffered, he sunk upon his knees, to experience that relief never denied, when sought in truth and sincerity of spirit, to the most guilty, or the most wretched; whilst tears—blessed tears—the first, perhaps, ever shed since his childhood, poured from his eyes over his pallid, wan, and wasted features, and rested upon the object enveloped in the canvas, which hung suspended round his neck, and which he now drew forth, revealing a miniature-case containing

the highly-finished portrait of a young and lovely girl, in the first tide of her spring beauty. With choking sobs he pressed it again and again to his lips, and then, with one last, long, lingering look of mournful emotion, replaced it as before.

And now, the lone solitude of everything around him seemed to strike upon his imagination. Where he was he knew not, and there appeared but little sign of the foot of man having ever previously trod the apparently trackless forest, which reached, as far as he could observe, the whole extent of the shore. It seemed, however, but to rouse his recently recovered faculties to yet greater and more determined exertion; and, after a few moments' reflection, he strode forward with firm and vigorous footsteps, in prosecution of the unknown and perilous voyage before him.

## PART THE FOURTH.

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### CHAPTER I.

THE wars of the British government with the Mahratta confederacy had been brought to a final termination on the conclusion, in 1806, of the protracted and sanguinary struggle which had raged, for so long a period, between the former and the Maharajah Jeswunt Row Holkar.

Their contest with this formidable chieftain had been the severest that the English power in India, up to this period, had found themselves engaged in; and the disasters of Monson's retreat, and the terrible and bloody repulse of the repeated assaults upon the stronghold of Bhurtpoor,—the consequences of a reckless hardihood and energetic daring, engendered by a long course of victory and conquest, which led to the neglect of the commonest means and precautions for ensuring success,—were

incidents as unforeseen as they proved unfortunate, though forgotten or disregarded in the long-continued, victorious, and brilliant career which finally brought the war to a conclusion.

Humbled, and deprived of some of the most valuable provinces which he had himself, not long previously, conquered and incorporated into his dominions, Holkar had sued for peace; and however humiliating the result of the contest had eventually proved to his authority and power, in one respect it was of material advantage to the present and future interests of his family and himself; and this was his full and entire recognition, by the British government, as an independent sovereign, not only over the territories descending to him by hereditary right, but over those which remained to him of the conquests by which he had so largely added to his possessions,—a measure which fully established him as one of the acknowledged Mahratta sovereigns of India, a position the rest of the confederates, the Peishwar, Scindia, and the Rajah of Berar, had, up to this period, only conceded to him upon sufferance, and even then, only with extreme reluctance, first, from the dread which his character inspired, and secondly, from his latterly uniting his fortune and interests with their own.

The force of the confederacy being now entirely

broken; it was obviously the policy of the British government to make every exertion in its power to prevent what tended in any way towards its future reunion; and although the acknowledged authority of the Peishwar, as head of the Mahratta states, had long since become more nominal than real; still, as its existence might eventually serve as a point for future coalitions, and that weak and vacillating prince, though the present ally of the English power, might, like a true Mahratta, hereafter turn against those to whom he was so recently indebted for the safety of his throne and kingdom, it was an object of some importance that each should be perfectly distinct from, and independent of, the other. And, therefore, long and sanguinary as their contest with Holkar had been,—formidable as his power had proved, and severe as had been the losses they had sustained in the early part of the war,—the recognition of his rule and sovereignty, on its conclusion, was, perhaps, not the less emphatically marked, from the knowledge of the fear and hatred with which he was regarded by the rest of the Mahratta sovereigns, whose efforts to crush him, previous to his acceding to the confederacy against the British government, had been unceasing from the very commencement of his career.

This extraordinary man,—who had raised the power and influence of his family to its highest pitch of greatness, and increased its territories and authority to an extent it had never previously attained, at a period when both had apparently sunk never more to rise, under the aggressions and encroachments of its powerful neighbours, the Peishwar and Dowlut Row Scindia,—had not even the claim of legitimacy in his favour, when, upon the murder of his brother by the former, he succeeded in escaping from his confinement, and raising once more the standard of his race. Accompanied by a band of followers, as reckless and desperate in fortune as himself, his life was at first that of a mere freebooter; but as success gradually crowned his efforts, in cutting off and intercepting valuable convoys and scattered detachments of his enemy's forces, the number of his partisans as progressively increased; and at length, joined by some few gallant French and English adventurers, who organized his troops, he found himself at the head of a considerable army. After a series of bloody conflicts and a variety of vicissitudes, which lasted over a number of years, he not only retrieved the fortunes and favours of his house, but after one of the most brilliant victories ever witnessed in western India, humiliated its bitterest enemy, the Peishwar, to the



dust, by obtaining military possession of Poona, the capital of his dominions.

From this time, his career had been one of continued success, up to the period of his collision with the British Government; the result of which, as we have previously mentioned, though it had considerably curtailed his power and dominions, had, in a moral point of view, established his authority in the territories which remained to him, on a basis much firmer than any upon which it had hitherto existed. Freed from all external warfare, and left for the first time, since the commencement of his reign, in a state of repose, Jeswunt Row now turned his most serious attention towards the internal administration of his kingdom, which he had too long neglected, and that with the vigour which might have been expected from his active mind. In every department the most searching inquiry was instituted, reforms established, and, above all, the strictest order and most rigorous economy introduced into the management of the finances.

Occupied as he was with the interior affairs of his government, his principal thoughts were, however, directed towards the entire remodelling and reorganization of his army, in the pursuit of which his mind displayed an activity, restlessness, and energy, that scarcely admitted of any intermission,

embodying, perhaps, the lurking seeds of that terrible disorder which, at no very distant period, brought his singular and eventful career to a close. During the late struggle, though comparatively uneducated, in some instances, almost illiterate, he had proved that he possessed a deep and clear insight into the art of war, and with a revenue and resources greatly inferior to either of the other Mahratta sovereigns,—the Peishwar, Scindia, or the Rajah of Berar,—and with forces infinitely less in numerical strength, he had successfully dared and accomplished against his formidable adversary what the combined forces of the two latter never would have attempted.

In the new system which he adopted, all the information and improvements which his experience and sagacity had derived even from his reverses, during the recent campaigns, were fully brought into play. He had become well aware that trained and disciplined troops required to be well officered to be completely effective, and that a loose body, however numerous, possessing no claims to distinction but the name and appearance, was the cause of injury, rather than otherwise, to the state they served; and useless as irregulars, their presence but tended to encumber any really efficient body of soldiery in the field. The object, therefore,

which he at present had in view, was the formation of a small, yet compact and well-disciplined, and, above all, a well-officered regular army, which, on the renewal of hostilities, he could join to the hordes of Pindarrees, and roving bands of horsemen, whom he knew at a signal he could always rally to his standard, allured by the prospect of plunder; but whose present services, now that the war was terminated, as well as their future stay in his dominions, he was determined to get rid of by the payment of bounties and gratuities, as well as the discharge of all the arrears of pay accruing to them.

In accordance with this resolution, the artillery, with the exception of a completely equipped siege-train, were altogether horsed.\* Among the infantry, the most robust and able-bodied, who had been distinguished for their conduct and bravery throughout the war, were formed into regiments (the remainder being disbanded), and placed under the authority of a leader carefully selected, in reference to his ability to command, as well as courage and gallantry. Still greater care was, if possible, manifested in the organization of the

\* It is perhaps necessary to observe that, up to a very late period, the whole of the heavy artillery in India, and even the light field-batteries, were drawn by bullocks.

cavalry, which, composed of men recruited from the whole of the provinces of Upper India, were trained on the principle of the British irregular cavalry, though riding the horses of government, and also armed at its expense;\* it being the conviction of the Mahratta prince that they were far more efficient, in this medium state, than when converted into dragoons, according to the usual European method.

For his commanders and immediate subordinates, Jeswunt Row had secured the services of a gallant set of French and English adventurers, several of whose names had already become widely known and celebrated throughout the wars in India; the chief of whom was a gentleman of the former nation, known as "Dharcoor Sahib," a corruption of the word "D'Harcourt," in whom, though he had only recently reached the shores of India, the quick eye of Holkar, with his intuitive sagacity, had detected that superiority of genius and experience, which induced him to nominate him to a position second only to himself, and invest him with a degree of power and authority almost as absolute and unlimited. This confidence he

\* In the irregular cavalry, the horse, arms, and accoutrements of the men are their own personal property, the government being responsible for their pay only.

very quickly proved had not been misplaced; as not only was every anticipation which the Maharajah had formed, in regard to his military talent and ability, eventually most fully verified, but he found he possessed, in an eminent degree, that invaluable qualification in a commander, the art of securing the confidence and regard of the soldiery of all ranks, and producing throughout the whole that harmony, and spirit of union and good feeling, which forms the most vital and essential requisite in the moral discipline and efficient working of an army.

Towards the close of December, in the year 1806, there was a sudden and general movement in one of those miniature worlds, an Indian camp, situated on the banks of the Nerbudda river. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, and a considerable portion of the cattle were still out grazing, the order for an immediate march being wholly unexpected. Horsemen were, however, immediately despatched to hasten their return; tents were struck and packed, and before an hour had elapsed, from the period the first sound of the bugle had been heard, conveying the order to march—such was the admirable discipline maintained—the ranks were formed up, the camp equipage had taken post in its respective positions, even the

greater part of the bazaar, with its ponderous loads, was ready to move, and all stood prepared, awaiting only the word to advance.

During the interval while these preparations were being made, a small *routee* or sleeping-tent, remained the last to be struck, which, from its vicinity to the flag-staff, and the presence of some five or six horsemen near it, as well as the appearance of a very beautiful jet-black Arab, richly caparisoned, which a syce or groom was leading backwards and forwards in front, announced as being occupied by the commander of the force.

Within its walls, and stretched upon a charpoy,\* reclined that commander, the same we have adverted to as being known by the name of Dharcoor Sahib; in whom we trust our readers have had no difficulty in recognising the hero of our narrative, Edward Harcourt, whose history since we last parted with him, in the pestilential marshes of the African coast, a few brief words will suffice to explain. After difficulties and dangers of the most imminent nature, he had succeeded in making his way to the nearest Dutch frontier settlement, and through the kindness of the warm-hearted Boers, eventually arrived at Cape Town.† He there

\* A description of light sleeping cot.

† The reader must remember that the Cape of Good Hope was not taken by the British forces till a twelvemonth after the period alluded to.



learnt all that had transpired in Europe during the three years' interval that had occurred, from the period when all was darkness to him,—the establishment of the Imperial throne in France, the renewal of the war, and the utter annihilation of the French naval power in the memorable and glorious, but dearly-purchased victory at Trafalgar, since which time, scarcely a French vessel of any description could show itself on any part of the ocean throughout the world.

Harcourt's first thought had been once more to return and seek the presence of that wonderful being, now the most powerful sovereign in Europe, to whose warm and steady friendship he had previously owed so much; but the idea was abandoned almost as soon as entertained. If even that now mighty ruler retained any reminiscence of the former ties which existed between them, or could recal them to mind after so long an interval, amid the toils and excitement of his daring, successful ambition, never, never more could he revisit those scenes, which had witnessed his few short fleeting years of transcendant happiness, to be terminated by such frightful and agonizing misery,—no; much rather endure poverty, exile, obscurity,—the very worst indeed that fate could inflict in preferred. His resolution was soon taken. India was at that

period the wide and extensive field for the bold, the daring, and the reckless, and towards its shores he resolved that his footsteps should be turned; there either to find that grave he felt would be the sole haven of rest the world could afford him, or, amid the varied scenes of interest which an altogether new career in life in that singular country would open, to acquire in some measure that tranquillity and repose (happiness he could not—dared not anticipate) he felt would be denied him in those lands which had witnessed his previously brief and transient, though brilliant and distinguished fortune.

In a small trading-vessel he reached one of the foreign settlements on the banks of the Ganges, from whence, as an unknown adventurer, he proceeded into the interior; and arriving in the territories of Holkar, just after the Mahratta prince had brought his war with the British government to a conclusion, he offered his services in the reorganization of his army. That acute and able chieftain at once discerned the superior merit of the new comer, and before many weeks had passed, as we have previously mentioned, he had nominated him to the supreme command of all his regular forces, by whom he became regarded with a devotion, which has not been uncommon on the part of the



native soldiery of India towards their European commanders, both French and English, though their esteem was not altogether unmingled with fear and awe. Indefatigable in attending to the interests of those under his control, Harcourt was severe, perhaps rigorous, in the maintenance of discipline among his troops; and those disorders peculiar to Asiatics, and their inveterate love of plunder, had on more than one occasion been repressed with such an iron, unrelenting hand, that it eventually became a proverb throughout the country, of Dharcour Sahib's camp proving a blessing to the surrounding villages wherever it moved.

In his communications with all ranks, whether high or low, his bearing, though distinguished by the highest degree of courtesy, was marked by that cold, grave, reserved exterior, which not unfrequently is productive of considerable effect upon orientals, but which with him seemed rather to originate in a deep-seated, devouring melancholy, more than any other feeling, since it was never seen to deviate into a smile; and when not occupied by the excitement of his military duties, at which he toiled incessantly, it caused him to sink into a brooding fit of musing, that would almost have been deemed approaching to absolute apathy,

but for the expression of agonizing wretchedness, which frequently pervaded his features during the period it prevailed. There was also another feature in his character which made the boldest tremble; and this was the very rare, but still occasional, outbreaks of furious passion, which sometimes burst from him, generally elicited by acts of oppression and injustice, which, in the scintillating glances of fire that flashed from his dark eyes, approaching almost to maniac wildness, caused the hearts of the bravest to sink within them: and we to those, in such moments, who were the cause of this ebullition!

On the present occasion it was evident one of these moods had but just passed away, only however to be followed by one yet more dangerous, judging by the deeply unrelenting and menacing expression, which, in calm and settled determination, had succeeded it, caused by the intelligence which had so suddenly broken up the camp, and put the troops in motion at an instant's warning, and which originated in a frightful outrage, perpetrated by a large body of Umcer Khan's Patans, who had recently been disbanded, and who, it appeared, exasperated by the measure, had suddenly surprised the strong hill fortress of Beejaghur, the small garrison defending which they had over-

powered and murdered, at the same time mortally wounding the Killedar,\* one of Holkar's most trusted and valued adherents, the Rajah Bulwunt Sing. Disappointed in the treasure they expected to have found there, and dreading the retribution that would follow from the vengeance of the Mahratta sovereign, they had seized upon the family of the ill-fated governor, whom they now detained as hostages, and threatened with every species of indignity and insult, in the event of a free passage not being accorded them to the frontier, under the safe conduct of an European officer, and other demands in the shape of claims of arrears and gratuities not being immediately complied with.

Intelligence of this outrage reached Jeswunt Row at a period when he was laid up with severe illness, the consequences alike of the fatigues and hardships he had endured during his recent campaigns, and those irregularities of life which had now become habitual to him.† Callous as the Mahratta prince had now become to all the finer feelings which had distinguished him at the commencement of his career, there was one trait in his

\* Governor.

† The shops at Bombay were drained to supply him with wines and liqueurs, in which he indulged to the greatest excess.  
—*Sir John Malcolm's Central India.*

character, which throughout his whole existence never changed, and which certainly reflects the highest honour upon his name and memory; this was his devoted and unshaken attachment to those who had adhered to his fortunes in the worst period of his adversity. It may therefore easily be conceived how deep were the transports of grief and anger with which he received the intimation of the untimely fate of one who, notwithstanding his high rank and family—being allied to the royal race of Jeypoor—had from the first moment of his escaping from the power of the Peishwar, adhered to his fortunes with the most unwearied constancy and fidelity; having ever been the same brave and loyal soldier, when his chief was a fugitive, wandering outcast, with a price upon his head, as when, at the zenith of his fame and power, he had recovered and so greatly enlarged his ancestral dominion.

In the first outburst of fierce passion and meditated vengeance, Holkar had sprung from his sick couch with the determination of exacting a fearful retribution in person. Unable, however, even to sit his horse, he transmitted his orders to Harcourt, stating all that he owed to the deceased rajah, and conjuring him, with the most earnest and energetic entreaty, to break up his camp, and proceed at once by a forced march to the fortress, from which

he was only forty miles distant, before the mutineers could gather in provisions, and make preparations for an effectual resistance; and having given his first thought towards preserving the life and honour of the wife and daughter of his unfortunate friend at any sacrifice, then to inflict such a lesson of retributive vengeance upon his murderers, as would be long after remembered, and which was the more absolutely necessary on this occasion, from the circumstance that the grievances of which they complained were wholly without foundation, every fraction of their arrears having been discharged, with a handsome gratuity paid them in addition.

But a few minutes elapsed subsequently to the receipt of this communication, before the trumpets and bugles rang throughout the camp, the order being transmitted to march on the instant; and though some slight delay intervened in consequence of its unexpected nature, before three o'clock, as we have previously mentioned, the columns were formed, the baggage packed, and all ready to move. Harcourt still remained plunged in his gloomy reverie, till the tramp of a horse approaching the tent aroused him, when, as he started up and stepped outside, he encountered an English officer, who dropping his sword said, "All ready, Sir."

"Forward, then!" was the reply; "we have a long march before us, and must reach Beejaghur as soon as we possibly can after midnight; that the men may have some three or four hours rest for their work in the morning."

The officer bowed, but despite the military principle of "hear and obey," a slight exclamation of surprise escaped him, evidently on learning the place of their destination.

"You shall hear what has occurred as we proceed," returned Harcourt, in answer to the implied query the interjection conveyed; "but in the meantime, tell Captain de la Mothe to have his guns in readiness for blowing open the gates, as the business before us will require sharpness and promptitude to ensure success, though our fellows will not be slack in entering upon their task, when they know the cause upon which they have been summoned."

He mounted his horse as he spoke, and in the next moment the troops were on their march. Harcourt had well divined that, on being made acquainted with the nature of the duty before them, the men would enter zealously, or rather perhaps vindictively and fiercely upon its execution. Recruited almost exclusively from the Rajahpoot tribes of northern and central India, intelligence



of the wanton and cold-blooded murder, perpetrated on the person of a scion of one of their noblest and most revered families, more particularly in this instance, where the victim was a commander generally known and esteemed throughout the whole army, would have been sufficient to have created the highest degree of exasperation in the minds of the soldiery; but, coupled on the present occasion with the atrocious threats of the murderers, in reference to the helpless beings in their power, embodying disgrace, dishonour, and, worst of all, the loss of caste, every feeling of their common nature was roused, and the compressed lip, the clenched teeth, and the flashing eye, fully expressed the determination by which they were actuated.

Throughout the night the march continued, the men apparently wholly insensible to every sensation of fatigue; and after a constant route of more than twelve hours, interrupted only by a short respite of half-an-hour's halt, in secrecy and silence they reached the place of their destination, where the dark rock loomed out gloomily in the deep shadow of the night, when each corps as they came up, successively occupied the positions which had been previously assigned them.

Harcourt's intention from the first had been to

take the place by surprise, feeling assured that the mutineers would be wholly unprepared for his rapid march; and though he looked for a bloody resistance, from the conviction they must have entertained that no mercy would be shown them, his great source of anxiety was the unfortunate females, the only chance for whose safety lay in the desperate expedient he proposed, and the hope that they would be altogether forgotten, in the sudden and unexpected assault he had resolved to hazard at daybreak, which would give the Patans enough to think of, in attending to their own safety. Both the lower and upper fortresses, the one at the base of the rock, and the other on its summit, were well known to Harcourt, as indeed they were to almost every officer and soldier in the force he commanded, and this would prove a great advantage to the assailants when once the gates were forced. He however was not without some latent idea, that secret and rapid as his march had been, and evidently up to this moment unknown to the enemy, some adherents of the late Rajah, who had escaped from the scene of slaughter which had occurred, would be on the look out, or lurking in the neighbourhood, for the purpose of giving information or assistance to any of Holkar's commanders who might approach, for the purpose



of revenging his murder; and effecting the liberation of his family, since the character of the Maharajah was too well known for it to be supposed for an instant that he would allow such an outrage to be passed over with impunity.

The expectations he had formed were fortunately very quickly verified, and that to an extent his most sanguine hopes never could have anticipated. Scarcely had the fortress been invested, and the troops, fully accoutred, directed to lie down and rest themselves after their toilsome march, preparatory to the work of the morning, before four or five men, more or less wounded, who had presented themselves at the outposts, were conducted to the commander's presence, and were immediately recognised as followers of the late Rajah. From their statement Harcourt ascertained, that nearly the whole of the mutineers were in all probability at that moment buried in profound repose, the consequence of a debauch in the early part of the evening, and of their in no way suspecting the proximity of any danger, not only from their not being aware of the vicinity of Harcourt's camp, but from the circumstance that, no answer being returned to their insolent demands, and confident in the security the important hostages in their possession afforded, they were led to believe some attempt at negoti-

ation would be tried before force was resorted to. The ladies were confined in a stone building in the Upper Fort, at the very summit of the rock, a small guard, relieved at stated intervals, keeping watch constantly over them.

This intelligence, satisfactory as it was in many respects, considerably increased the anxiety of Harcourt in regard to the principal object he had in view, viz. the safety of the unfortunate women. He well knew the character of the ruffians to whom he was opposed, and that their remorseless and sanguinary nature would speedily induce them to carry their hideous threats into execution, if only as a display of the last impotent efforts of vindictive hate. Had they been detained in any part of the lower fortress, there was every chance they might have been rescued in the confusion occasioned by a vigorous and unexpected onslaught upon every part of the place at once: now, however, the full peril of their situation flashed upon him, and for some time he pondered in doubt and perplexity as to what course he could pursue.

As, momentarily lost in thought, he revolved in his mind what prospects of success appeared likely to be the result of any different plan to that he had proposed, he was suddenly relieved by a piece of information from one of the rajah's followers,

as important as it was agreeable in the hopes which it inspired. This man, who fortunately also was the only one of the party unwounded, stated that there was a secret, and to the Patans an unknown path, that himself and several of his companions had discovered when in pursuit of the chace, which led from the base of the rock on the eastern side, to where the walls of the fort did not extend—to its summit—by which with great labour and difficulty it might be reached, though accompanied also with considerable danger; not only from the chance of discovery by the mutineers, or the certain death that would inevitably attend any person attempting the ascent missing their footing, but from the wild beasts who haunted the track, particularly at night, and who had repeatedly carried off cattle when grazing in its vicinity. The soldier concluded by declaring that, hazardous as the experiment was, yet to avenge the fate of his late commander, and rescue those most dear to him when in life, as well as to secure the favour of so great and distinguished a commander as Dharcoor Sahib, he was ready to lead the way, if a small number of men would accompany him, and either effect the liberation of the ladies or perish in the attempt.

Almost before the man had concluded his statement, a superior officer, returned the English-

ment, Harcourt's resolution was formed, and desperate as the proposed experiment appeared, he resolved not only to hazard it, but to head the enterprise himself. Luckily the night, though dark, was clear, and with three hours before them ere daylight would break, there was at least time to try the chance of success. Laying his hand therefore on the shoulder of the sepoy, he said, "You are a brave and gallant soldier, and shall duly receive the reward of your faithful service; I myself will accompany you in this business."

"Yourself, Dharcoor Sahib?"

"Ay, myself," replied Harcourt, quietly: "and now to get the men together; for what is to be done, must be done speedily, as we have no time to lose."

"General Harcourt," said a voice beside him, "with your permission I am the first volunteer for this duty." It was that of the English officer we have already adverted to, which spoke.

"Colonel Ryan," replied his commander gravely, "this cannot be; if—if—in fact it is useless to conceal it—you have been witness to what has passed, and must be aware that the service of to-night is one of more than usual hazard; and risking more lives than are absolutely necessary, would be a wanton and useless sacrifice."

"When a superior officer," returned the English-

man calmly, "takes the duty of a subordinate upon himself, he surely will not debar that subordinate from participating in a danger, which more properly belongs to him to encounter."

"But," replied Harcourt, "considerations of the highest moment, relative to the success of the enterprise in which we are engaged, must prevent my complying with your request; you know even better than myself, that the whole stay and hope of the troops are centered in their European superiors. If I fail in the proposed undertaking, there is certainly one less, though that is a loss which can be repaired, and must at all events in the present instance be hazarded; but your presence will be vitally necessary with the men in the morning, the more particularly in the event of anything occurring to myself; for if I mistake not, we may look out for desperate work when the assault takes place, as these scoundrels will be well aware when the conflict begins, that they fight with halters round their necks, and in that conviction will resist to the last."

"There are," returned Ryan, "De Meuron, Harding,\* Vickers, and De la Mothe, all at their

\* There were two brave and gallant young men of this name in Holkar's service, but I am unaware if they were in any way related to each other. The one more generally known and celebrated in Indian history, was killed, some years previous to

respective posts, and ready at a moment's notice, only awaiting the signal. Under such leaders success cannot but be certain, and therefore once more, whatever may be the fate of the expedition on which you are bound, let me earnestly solicit that I may share it. I have a much greater experience of the character of the sepoy than you have; brave as they are, they not unfrequently lose nerve under a sense of secret or unseen danger, and in an enterprise like the present, coolness and presence of mind are far more essential to its success, than even the most determined courage."

"You are a true Numukwallah,"\* said Harcourt with a melancholy smile. "Be it, then, as you

the events mentioned in our narrative, in command of the Maharajah's infantry, at the battle of Poonah; the action which gave to Holkar military possession of the capital of his enemy, the Peishwar. This loss deeply affected Jeswunt Row, and for years afterwards he never failed to express the greatest regard for his memory.

\* It is difficult to impart to the European reader the true meaning of this expressive Oriental term; perhaps the best exemplification of it will be found in the "Gurwood Despatches," when the Duke in answer to the complaint of some of his friends, relative to how his meritorious services had been neglected, and wondering at his condescending to accept the simple command of a brigade, after having commanded armies, and been invested with almost absolute political power, writes to his correspondent in reply, "The reason is found in my being a Numukwallah, as we say in India."



wish,—but quick, and pick the men whom you think the best adapted for the service, and—stay, tell De la Mothe to let us have a few of the drag-ropes from his guns, as occasion might arise in which they may prove of material assistance.”

The Englishman hastened away to give the necessary order, and in the space of a few minutes all was ready for the proposed expedition, a momentary difficulty only occurring in selecting the requisite number of volunteers from the crowds who readily came forward by whole companies to offer themselves for the duty. They consisted of about forty in number, athletic, splendid looking fellows, of whom about two-thirds were armed, the remainder carrying the drag-ropes, hatchets, and bill-hooks, which, as a measure of precaution, their commander had deemed it advisable to take with them. They moved forward at a rapid rate, the men having divested themselves of the whole of their clothing, with the exception of a cloth tightened round their loins, and soon reached the base of the hill. The ascent at first, though difficult, was easier than either of the European officers anticipated; as, though the path lay occasionally along a track which skirted some dark looking chasm, by the aid of the trees and bushes they were enabled to make their way with comparative facility.

More than two-thirds of their task had been accomplished with success, when the whole party were abruptly brought to a stand-still, by what their guide had previously warned them during their route would prove the most difficult and hazardous part of the whole journey. This was what at first appeared a mass of bluff, almost perpendicular rock, which reached to an extent of nearly three hundred feet in height, and which skirted an abyss, which apparently reached to the very bottom of the ascent.

For a moment the boldest among that fearless band was somewhat startled, and even the guide seemed to hesitate at the prospect that here lay before them, the great danger of which, the darkness, while not impeding the view, may perhaps have exaggerated,—but the hand of Harcourt was promptly laid upon the latter's shoulder, as in a low stern voice he said, "Lead on."

Gradually and cautiously an artillery lantern, which had hitherto been covered, was now displayed, and, except on one side, darkened, so as to throw the whole force of its rays in an upward direction, by which means everything became clearly visible. Thick and stunted bushes grew out from clefts on the surface, and there was occasionally some degree of footing, caused by the



rock in a few places being worn away. Dangerous as any further advance appeared, it could only be made in this direction; accordingly, Harcourt directing every one but the guide and himself to remain fast for the present, each throwing a loose coil of rope over his arm, commenced their perilous task. In breathless anxiety their companions awaited the result below, scarcely daring to glance upwards, from the dizzy and sickening feeling of giddiness the action engendered; but after a comparatively short interval, in which the minutes appeared like hours, the shaking of the cords as a signal for those who held them to let go, announced that their commander and his attendant had reached the summit in safety. Ryan and a second soldier quickly followed, carrying additional ropes, and hauling themselves up by those which had already been made fast to the trees above.

In this manner the whole party were safely landed upon the ledge above, from whence the remainder of the ascent was not only easy of accomplishment, but only a very short distance from the low walls of the fortress, towards which they now cautiously and silently turned their footsteps. A short time sufficed to bring them to the foot of the rampart, and, on arriving at the spot which the guide pointed out as where the building was

situated in which the ladies were confined, which proved to be close to the parapet, they found the wall in so dilapidated a state from the heavy rains of the recent monsoon—forming indeed almost a practical breach—as to render their entrance a work of very little difficulty. Whispering final instructions to his men, Harcourt led the way, and stealthily ascending, as he reached the top, and cast a keen and guarded look of scrutiny around him, the glance was sufficient to render him master of every detail connected with the place.

Almost immediately in his front was a large window reaching nearly to the ground, opening to an apartment, from which a broad light streamed, giving to view two female figures within. A few paces in advance, within two yards indeed of himself, was a man who stood motionless, and was evidently the watch, who had fallen asleep upon his post; while upon a description of platform to the right, lay the recumbent forms of some fourteen or fifteen others, who were also buried in profound slumber. Ryan and his followers were close behind him, and there was not a moment to be lost. With a single bound he sprang over, and seizing the sentinel in his powerful grasp, he hurled him over the rampart, and then dashed through the window. A cry of terror burst from the inmates

of the chamber, but catching the foremost, a very beautiful girl, or rather child, for she scarcely appeared thirteen years of age, in his arms, he placed his hand upon her mouth, and said, "Hush! your safety—everything depends upon silence; we are friends from the Maharajah." In the next instant there was heard the sound of a scuffle without, followed by deep and heavy groans, suppressed almost as soon as heard. Too late for their safety, the sleepers had started to their arms, but before a sword could be drawn, or a single blow struck, the weapons of their adversaries were buried in their hearts, and each lay weltering in his gore, a lifeless corpse.

Calling to Ryan and his followers to assist the elder female, and carrying the young girl himself, the party now commenced retracing their steps with all possible expedition. They met with little difficulty till they came to the descent of the rock, which had previously so nearly frustrated their enterprise; but after a few whispered words with the Englishman, the eyes of both ladies were bandaged, and while Harcourt with the younger one lowered himself to the bottom, the former, and one of the men supporting the elder between them, following in his track, were equally successful. Pressing downward with all the speed that a

regard for their safety permitted, they soon reached the open plain, and arrived in camp just as the first light of the false dawn\* intimated that they were not far from daybreak; their hazardous undertaking accomplished under circumstances of such cool energy and daring, having met with no other impediments than those which we have already adverted to.

“Let an escort at once attend these ladies on the road to Indore,”† said Harcourt, “and my own tents follow for their use.” Both knelt at his feet, and each seizing a hand, pressed it with Oriental devotion to their head and heart, and while the sobs of the younger prevented her giving utterance to the deep and grateful feelings which oppressed her by their weight, the elder, in that simple yet impressive dignity of tone peculiar to the higher class of women of the Rajapootne tribes, expressed her fervent acknowledgments by the invocations of future victories to his all-conquering

\* In many parts of the East there exists what is called by Orientals the False Dawn. Its light is extremely deceptive, and without the means of ascertaining the actual time of the morning, the most experienced traveller is often deceived by its appearance, which usually comes about half-an-hour before day-break, and is succeeded by a greater degree of darkness than prevailed previously. In some parts of Persia it is of longer continuance.

† The capital of Holkar's dominions.

sword, of a numerous posterity to whom should be transmitted his glorious fame and courageous spirit, and similar Eastern aphorisms peculiar to the warlike race from which she drew her origin.

Gently disengaging himself, Harcourt led them towards the elephant which had been prepared to carry them on their journey; the young girl seemed to cling to him to the last, as if, parting from him, she lost her best and surest safeguard; and it was only as she prepared to ascend the howdah,\* she murmured in almost inarticulate tones, "May the God of the Christian, the Hindoo, and the Mussulman, befriend you for this deed. I am, alas! fatherless and friendless, but the prayer of the orphan is not always lost, even when directed towards imploring blessings upon the greatest and the most powerful, and averting from them those dangers, common alike to the mightiest and the meanest."

The first faint streaks of dawn were visible upon the horizon, and lulled in their fancied security, the mutineers but little imagined the doom that was impending over them. The dark masses were now seen silently moving forward; in low and suppressed tones the word of command was passed

\* The seat or litter placed upon the back of the elephant.

along the ranks, and even yet no alarm was raised! At once there was heard a loud stunning crash, accompanied by the roar of artillery, and the vengeful columns of the stormers rushed through the breach the Frenchman's guns had so effectually made,—for not only were the gates blown to atoms, but large portions of the wall adjacent to them were brought down by the shock—and wheeling outwards, they scoured the ramparts. Too late sensible of their fatal apathy, and the false confidence they had entertained, the Patans yet made a desperate resistance, fighting with all the recklessness of despair; quarter was neither asked for nor obtained; and though some endeavoured to make their escape by dropping over the ramparts, their fate was equally as certain, since they were sabred or speared without mercy by the cavalry outside. Within an hour from the commencement of the attack all was over, the interior of the fortress presenting but one general picture of human slaughter, the ramparts and all throughout being covered with corpses, which lay in heaps on every side.



of which he constantly issued orders for putting numerous innocent persons to death whose lives were only saved through the minister's deceptions and humane intervention.

During this time his army had reached a spirit of discipline and organization that perhaps no native state in India, either before or since (with the exception of the Sikhs) had ever previously attained.

## CHAPTER II.

A PERIOD of nearly two years had elapsed, since the occurrence of the events recorded in our last chapter. The territories of Jeswunt Row had attained a state of flourishing prosperity, under the able administration of his minister Balaram Seit, who, notwithstanding his weak and timid nature in a physical point of view, exhibited a considerable degree of moral courage, not only in conducting the affairs of the state, and enforcing, in spite of the opposition of powerful interests, those measures necessary for its prosperity; but in remaining firmly at his post, when the boldest and bravest among the Maharajah's followers shrunk from approaching him, from the now constant prevalence of those terrible bursts of phrenzied passion, to which he was constantly subject, announcing the approach of that fearful malady, which, furious at first, gradually sunk into vacant idiocy towards the last few years of his life, and in the paroxysms

of which he constantly issued orders for putting numerous innocent persons to death, whose lives were only saved through the minister's dexterous and humane intervention.

During this time, his army had reached a spirit of discipline and organization, that perhaps no native state in India, either before or since (with the exception of the Seikhs,) had ever previously attained. In attending to and inspecting the minutest details connected with it, the Mahratta sovereign was unremitting; being occupied from the earliest hour in the morning till late at night, in superintending and assisting his French and English subordinates in their duties, not unfrequently discharging himself every office in person, from drill corporal to commander of the forces.

At first, on peace being concluded between the British government and the Maharajah, he had shown every disposition to observe his engagements; and in spite of the reverses he had sustained, really to cultivate the most friendly relations with his victorious enemy, owing perhaps either to the moral influence the alliance afforded him, or from his sagacity enabling him to perceive that successful aggression was out of the question,—if indeed it was not a mixture of both. As his malady however gained ground upon him, these sentiments under-



went a sudden and violent change; though with all the cunning of his race, heightened by the terrible disorder which afflicted him, he sought to conceal his intentions till they should be ripe for execution. He at first commenced sounding his European officers, as to what course they would pursue in the event of a renewal of the contest, and their opinion as to the result; but finding them either unable or unwilling to enter upon any discussion broached under such ambiguous circumstances, he at length spoke more openly and plainly, intimating his determination of attempting to regain at every risk, on the first fitting opportunity, the provinces he had lost, and desired to know their views on the occurrence of such a contingency.

From all the English he at once received a respectful, but firm and decided refusal to serve against their government and country; and from the French almost the same reply. The situation of the latter, indeed, was certainly different from that of the former; but belonging exclusively to families of the old French nobility, they were reluctant to serve against the only land which had afforded a refuge, in the dark period of their adversity, to their proscribed race, with the people of which, more particularly in India, they possessed several ties in common—friendships cemented by many

perils, shared while serving together in the armies of the native princes—and other bonds of union, which would be broken for no other purpose than to create the deepest injury, if not ruin to themselves, as they foresaw and distinctly hinted to the Maharajah, that the contest would only terminate in the destruction of his sovereignty and power, if not of his family and himself.

No less surprised than irritated at this opposition, there was one circumstance connected with it, which caused a more than usually frightful ebullition of phrenzied passion on the part of Jeswunt Row, an event we have already adverted to as being now unhappily of too common occurrence, and this was the peremptory refusal of Harcourt to accede to the measure, and his declaration that, on the first shot being fired, he should tender his resignation. From one or two trivial incidents, Holkar had entertained the impression that his commander disliked the English extremely, and had therefore relied upon at least securing his services, by far the most valuable of the whole, in the event of his proposed rupture; enraged therefore at his unexpected disappointment, on the conclusion of the interview which terminated the discussion, and which took place at a private Durbar, the tiger-like glare which glittered in his eye was observed by

all present, and deemed an augury of evil, which the vindictive hate it exhibited would seek to gratify to the utmost on the first fitting opportunity.

Unmindful, or regardless however of what had occurred, more particularly since the Mahratta prince almost immediately afterwards resumed his usual frank and courteous bearing towards him, Harcourt a few weeks afterwards quitted the capital to superintend the camp of exercise and instruction under his command; several of these having at his suggestion been formed each year in different parts of the country, during the continuance of the cold weather.

Occupied with his military duties, to which he as usual gave almost his exclusive attention, as if from the relief they afforded him from thought, Harcourt after a time became sensible of what appeared to him to be a series of petty annoyances, inflicted upon him by orders from the Durbar. His force at this period consisted of two batteries of light field-artillery, two regiments of cavalry, and six battalions of infantry, the whole commanded by European officers, and composed of the troops which had from the first been entrusted to his command, and had been raised and disciplined by himself. Gradually, however, of late, his com-

manders, both French and English, had been changed, and natives, of whom he knew nothing, substituted in their place, greatly to the dissatisfaction of the men, whose murmurs, at first low and muttered, at length became loud, and indeed somewhat threatening in regard to their new leaders.

Harcourt sternly strove to repress the movement, though he at once saw his inability to do so, deprived as he was of the presence and assistance of those, under whose rule and authority not the slightest sign of insubordination, or misconduct of any kind, up to this moment, in the remotest degree ever manifested itself. He soon, however, became aware, that there were some other latent causes connected with himself, in regard to this movement, which, though he was unable thoroughly to understand its ramifications, he felt sensible had reference to his own security and safety, which his men were resolutely determined to protect and defend at every hazard. The guard of honour usually mounted over the tent of a Commander, within the last few days, without any order from himself, had been doubled, the men composing it never putting off their accoutrements, or lying down to rest for an instant, while in taking his evening ride or walk, if he proceeded a hundred

yards from the camp, a strong escort was ever in attendance to follow him, his reiterated desire that such a retinue should be discontinued being either respectfully disregarded, or followed by such earnest solicitation on the part of the soldiers to remain, that perplexed and half angry, yet not without suspicion that they must have some grounds for their apparently singular conduct, he was induced to acquiesce in their request.

He had returned from a general parade one evening, and was proceeding towards his tent, when an elderly native who was sauntering leisurely along, gradually approached him. The man had the appearance of a respectable banyan,\* and it was not improbable was one of that class residing in the grand bazaar of his camp. There was something prepossessing in the old man's exterior, and it struck Harcourt that his object in loitering in his path was a wish to speak to himself. As he was within two hundred yards of his tent, he dismissed his orderly, the only person by whom he was attended, upon some trifling errand, and slowly continued his walk. Scarcely, however, had the soldier quitted him, before the native we have mentioned walked rapidly up, and glancing cautiously around, placed a sealed billet in his hand; then

\* A combination of merchant, broker, and general dealer.



putting his finger to his lip as a signal for secrecy and silence, hurried away.

Surprised beyond measure at the incident, Harcourt hastily opened the letter, and read the following words:—"On no account whatever cross the river, or allow yourself to be separated from your men, who are faithful and true. You are surrounded with danger and treachery of every kind, even in your own camp, but they will defend you from both.—This is from one, who owes everything in life to you, and who is constantly occupied in watching over your safety."

Harcourt gazed upon this mysterious epistle with equal wonder and perplexity: it was written in the Persian language and character, and the singular beauty and delicacy it exhibited in its delineation, fully expressed that it was not the production of a person accustomed to the usual loose, half-legible, running hand generally in vogue, or still less the laboured and measured writing of the professed carcoon.\* From the letter his thoughts reverted to the question of who was the person whose interest in himself seemed to be so striking and peculiar, and what could be the nature of the obligations alluded to, which had created such a feeling in the mind of the writer?—As he hastily ran over

\* Writer.

the whole of his career, from the period of his first entry into Holkar's service, in order to obtain some clue to its discovery, he tasked his imagination in vain to find anything that appeared to rest upon any reasonable foundation. There were many of the nobles of the Maharajah's Durbar, who had experienced courtesy and kindness at his hands, but the coldness of his usual demeanour had invariably prevented his forming those ties, which resembled anything approaching to intimacy or friendship.

Wearied with useless conjecture, Harcourt returned to his tent, with the determination of ascertaining, if possible, on the morrow, who was the person from whom he had received the communication, and if he was an habitual resident in camp.

On the following morning, however, a very serious event occurred, which for the time drove the reminiscence of every other circumstance from his mind. The gun had scarcely fired, and the reveillé sounded, and Harcourt was about issuing forth to mount his horse for the purpose of proceeding to his usual exercise and inspection, when the Havildar, or sergeant commanding his guard, hurriedly entered the tent, and announced that the artillery were in a state of open mutiny.

Rushing to his horse which stood ready without, and springing into the saddle, Harcourt galloped with all speed to the right of the lines, where the guns were posted, and arrived in the midst of a state of uproar and confusion which baffles all description. The horses were harnessed, but the head and heel ropes, used at their picquets, though packed as if ready for a march, were thrown on the ground; some of the cannon were limbered up, but the tumbrils of the others were at some distance from their pieces, as if expressly placed there for the purpose of preventing their being brought together, while two or three of the latter were even dismounted, and the matériel scattered around! In front of the whole was the recently joined commander, encircled by a small party of the oldest and steadiest among the soldiery, evidently with the purpose of protecting him from the violence of the rest; although that this was merely an obligation of duty on their part, and originated in anything but a regard for himself, might easily have been gathered from the very expressive but coarse and unflattering adjurations that were occasionally addressed to him by his protectors, as the author of the storm which had arisen, and the disgrace which it had entailed upon them all.

The spirit of exasperation among the men had



evidently reached its highest pitch, when Harcourt suddenly arrived upon the ground. It was now broad daylight, and although altogether ignorant of what had caused this sudden outbreak among men renowned throughout the whole of India for their loyalty, fidelity, and discipline,\* a single

\* There are few troops in whom these qualifications are so conspicuous, united to the most undaunted bravery, as the Golundauze, or Native Artillery of the Indian army, which has everywhere and on every occasion manifested itself both in the British Service, and that of the various Eastern Sovereigns. Their devotion to their guns is something which perhaps no other army in the world ever witnessed; and whatever odds may be opposed to them, however desperate any chance of success, they will defend them to the last; and in every contest celebrated in the annals of India, they have invariably been found scorning to retreat when their pieces could not be carried off, and rejecting all quarter, have been cut down at their guns. In the bloody battle of Mahidpoor, which followed the second rupture of Holkar's government with the English, some years after the malady of Jeswunt Row had terminated in his death, this fate attended the men to whom our present narrative refers, who perished amid the universal regret and admiration of their enemies. Almost at the very commencement of this memorable action, a large body of Holkar's cavalry, who were stationed on the left rear of the artillery, seized with a disgraceful panic, abandoned their position in the most dastardly manner, and such was the indignation of the artillerymen at this cowardly defection of their comrades, by which their flanks and rear were altogether uncovered, that, turning round some of their guns, they poured a storm of grape and canister into their ranks, giving them, as they characteristically expressed it, "something to run for." The feeling we have alluded to certainly reaches the highest pitch of enthusiasm, and has even something

glance had been sufficient to explain to him how matters stood. As the figure of the well-known referential in its nature, or at least had, as I remember it some eight and twenty years since, when in the artillery lines it was no uncommon occurrence to see the guns decorated with chaplets of flowers, in commemoration of any event in which they had been engaged. So strong and sensitive is this peculiarity, that it has occasionally given rise to scenes somewhat bordering upon the ludicrous, and of one of these I was myself a witness. On a grand field-day, in which all the troops composing the division were assembled, under a distinguished General Officer recently arrived from Europe, who had never previously served in India, it had been arranged in the programme of the manœuvres to be executed, that the light field-artillery were to be momentarily captured by a squadron of cavalry detached for the purpose. All had proceeded with the utmost order and precision, till the period arrived for the execution of that part of the order of the day relative to the guns, which were posted between two squares of infantry, the one composed of one of Her Majesty's Corps, the other of a regiment of Sepoys, into whose ranks the artillerymen were to have fallen on the charge being made. On the cavalry galloping up and making known to their commander, a veteran old Soubahdah, how they were to proceed, the latter was first at a loss to understand the meaning of what was intimated to him. He was, I think, one of the finest specimens of the Rajapootne race I ever remember to have seen: upwards of six feet in height, his powerful athletic figure, though he had been nearly half a century in the service, was erect as a poplar, forming a singular contrast to the silvery colour of his enormous whiskers and mustachios, which were white as the driven snow. On its being explained to him, that the guns were by the existing hypothesis supposed to be taken, the effect of the announcement was as unexpected as it was surprising, as jumping astride the nearest gun, the old gentleman waved his sabre round his head, and swore that he would cut down the first man who presumed to touch them, while his whiskers and mustachios seemed

noble Arab charger and his rider burst upon the scene, there was a momentary increase in the confusion which prevailed, but which almost immediately subsided into the most perfect silence.

"What is this?" said the deep, stern accents of Harcourt, and his voice seemed to echo like a trumpet-call to the remotest extremity of the ground. "Who has dared to create a spirit of disaffection and mutiny where I command? To your guns this instant!—*serrez vos rangs!*—attention!" he continued, giving the prefatory orders as if for his usual parade, "and let me see if all order is lost here!"

positively to dilate and stand erect, with the wrathful and indignant feeling the intimation had excited. "Confound the old fellow's obstinacy!" said the captain commanding the squadron: "lay hold of the guns there directly," he shouted to his men, feeling perhaps in some slight measure irate at the loud laughter which issued from the ranks of the infantry, to whom the scene was evidently a source of considerable amusement. Several of the troopers sprang from their horses in compliance with their leader's orders, but the belligerent attitude of the veteran Soubahdar was now backed by the rammers and sponge-staffs of his men, which, brandished in their brawny and vigorous arms, threatened a solution of the question at issue, which must inevitably have terminated in some broken heads, when fortunately the General, followed by his staff, galloped up to the spot to enquire what was the cause of the confusion apparently prevalent. On the state of affairs being explained to him, he at once withdrew the order, and apologising to the old warrior for his inadvertence in having issued it, good humour was at once restored. I accompanied Sir Edward — to his quarters, when

His words seemed to act with the spirit of magic upon the rioters; all was order and obedience upon the instant; the scattered pieces of the guns were collected, and the cannon remounted,—the men fell into their ranks, the horses were harnessed to the tumbrils, and the whole stood forth the representative of the most exact and perfect discipline, where a few minutes previously all had been turbulence and insubordination.

“And now,” said Harcourt, “what has been the cause of all this disturbance? Let me repeat the question, and demand who has dared to create mutiny and disaffection in a camp under my orders?

the parade was over, and apparently the incident had deeply impressed him, as he constantly repeated: “They are splendid fellows those men certainly—true soldierly feeling—true soldierly feeling.” It was not till twenty years afterwards that I again met the veteran in England, when his first question was whether I remembered the episode of the old Soubahdar, and requesting to know if the men still retained the chivalrous and high-minded sentiments which then distinguished them. I could not reply to the latter part of his query from my own personal knowledge, but mentioned I had recently been informed by some Artillery officers, that the reduction of the pay, and some other impolitic measures on the part of the Government, prevented their now obtaining the superior class of men who formerly entered the service. The gallant captain who commanded the squadron of cavalry upon this occasion, is now a Reverend Doctor in the North of England, and should these pages by any chance ever meet his eye, it may perhaps cause a smile in the reminiscence it will recal to his mind.

The men glanced from one to another, but for some time no answer was returned; at length a non-commissioned officer stepped forward, and reverentially saluting his chief, said:—

“Joonab (Excellency), about half-an-hour before daybreak, we received a sudden order, as if issued by yourself, in the name of the Maharajah, to march to Indore. The mandate was promptly complied with, and it was only when prepared to mount that we found no such instructions had been conveyed to the rest of the troops, and it was doubtful if any directions regarding this movement had been given by yourself. On respectfully seeking to ascertain this, that person (pointing to their newly arrived commander,) threatened us with the vengeance of the Government, in whose name he acted, unless the most implicit obedience was yielded to his orders. We demanded the sanction of your concurrence, and were then menaced with force to compel us to submission, on hearing which, some of the men would have torn him to pieces, but he was saved from their fury for the purpose of being delivered up to you.”

“This, then, is your work?” said Harcourt, turning upon the man with a flashing eye.

The detected conspirator replied sullenly, that he acted under Holkar's orders; but alarmed

perhaps at the fierce and vindictive glances which met his view on every side, he produced written instructions under the Maharajah's seal, to show that he asserted nothing but what was absolute truth. The scroll which he tendered to Harcourt was in the Mahratta language, of which he possessed a very limited knowledge, but a glance was sufficient to convince him that the signet was genuine; and although he entertained no doubt in his own mind that the man was a willing agent in what was a treacherous intrigue against his authority, and in all probability his life, under existing circumstances he could not bring himself to use any measures of retaliation against a mere hireling, acting under the instructions of one too powerful to be reached.

"Were I to serve you as you merit," said Harcourt, sternly addressing the traitor, "I should cause you to be hanged to the nearest tree; as whether this document is a forgery or otherwise, no person has the power to issue any orders, no matter emanating from whom, unless by the sanction, and through the channel of the soldiers' immediate superior. But begone! quit the camp on the instant, and in the event of your again being found within its precincts, the consequences rest with yourself."

The man scowled darkly at him with a glance



of impotent but vindictive hate, and then hastily quitted the spot.

In the course of the day, Harcourt rode down the lines of the general bazaar at the period when it was usually most crowded, in hopes of discovering the man who had delivered him the letter on the preceding evening. His expectations were not disappointed, as, seated in a tent surrounded with bales of cloth, and other articles of merchandise betokening the opulence of a wealthy and flourishing trader, was seated his friend, apparently diligently occupied in the exercise of his calling. The stir created by Harcourt's appearance caused him to look up, when their eyes met in instantaneous recognition; a warning glance, however, unseen by any but himself, intimated to the soldier that he was not in any way to notice him, though in passing down the street, after adverting to some casual commissariat details, he carelessly enquired of the Kotwal,\* who assiduously attended him, if he knew anything relative to the merchant in question.

The answer was that he had only recently arrived in camp, but from being evidently rich, had been enabled to appropriate to himself a considerable traffic, by underselling his com-

\* The Chief or Superintendent of the Bazaar.

petitors, and consequently acquiring no slight degree of popularity among the soldiery. There was nothing in any way remarkable in this communication, and musing upon what could create the interest this man seemed apparently to take in what concerned him, or by whom he could be actuated in doing so, Harcourt vainly strove to obtain a solution of the enigma.

For nearly three weeks after the occurrence which had created such commotion in the camp all was order and tranquillity. The different commanders who had succeeded their European predecessors, if they nourished any hostile intentions towards their superior, at least carefully concealed them, sensible that they were vigilantly watched by their men, and in fact, in some measure, prisoners in their hands,—as not an order, even of the most trivial nature, dared they afterwards issue, till the soldiery were satisfied it had been ratified and confirmed by their chief. It was one evening just as night was setting in, after Harcourt had returned from the evening parade, that he was aroused by a voice at the door of his tent, the accents of which seemed not unfamiliar to his ear, demanding admittance.

There is a vague feeling in the human mind difficult to define, which the merest trifles will



often create, and which events, unimportant in themselves, will render lasting and impressive; and how often has some peculiarity in the voice, some slight characteristic of manner, neither of which, under ordinary circumstances, would have led to any observation, been the precursor of the inward conviction which strikes upon the hearer or beholder, that something of unusual moment has either happened or is about to occur.

It was perhaps an instinct of this nature which pervaded Harcourt at the present time; and he was on the point of rising to desire that the person without, whoever he was, should be immediately admitted, when the Banyan who had previously appeared before him suddenly entered the tent, and notwithstanding his efforts to disguise it, in a state of the highest degree of agitation, his eyes being bloodshot, and his whole frame apparently trembling under the influence of horror and alarm.

"Are we alone, Sahib?" he said in a low, suppressed voice, and speaking in Persian as if familiar with that language.

Harcourt glanced around, but no one was near with the exception of a servant who had followed the old man upon his entrance, in evident curiosity and surprise. He signed to the man to withdraw,

and then turning to his singular and unexpected visitor, and speaking the same tongue he himself had used, he said, "Fear not, no one here shall do you the slightest injury—speak frankly—what is your business?"

The man with trembling hands drew forth from the folds of the loose cloth which enwrapped him a letter, which a glance sufficed to show to Harcourt was in the same hand-writing as that which the Banyan had previously delivered to him. Tearing open the seal, the following words met his view. "Fly the instant this reaches you, every arrangement has been made, and the bearer will conduct you to the only place of safety Holkar's dominions can afford, for any attempt to gain the frontier would too surely end in your destruction. The Maharajah's anger against you has been excited to madness;—at this moment troops are marching upon your encampment from all quarters—and in four and twenty hours from the receipt of this, your men will be surrounded by a force, any resistance opposed to which can but terminate in one continued scene of human slaughter;—they will refuse to surrender you, and will stand to the last; but will the brave and noble Dharcoor Sahib, from false pride or a mere disregard of his own life, cause

the blood of his gallant soldiers to flow like water, for no useful purpose whatever, when, by a timely but temporary concealment, he preserves both their lives and honour, hereafter to manifest to them how highly he appreciates both?"

It would be difficult to describe the feelings which pervaded Harcourt as he perused the warning this singular epistle conveyed, of the truth and accuracy of which he felt an inward conviction, that no suspicion caused by the mystery attending it could dispel. Careless, reckless of death himself,—in fact, perhaps, almost disposed to welcome it as the greatest boon fate could award him—would he be justified in what would virtually amount to raising the standard of revolt against a Government, which, notwithstanding its present treachery, had previously honoured, trusted, and confided in him to the very highest extent, and who at least would have this excuse for the conduct they had displayed, that ever accustomed to duplicity and falsehood themselves, they could not be led to disbelieve in its existence in others? Besides, as the letter specified, could he wantonly sacrifice the lives of the brave men he commanded, for what was at least a very questionable point of honour?

He strode rapidly up and down the tent for a few minutes, and then suddenly facing his visitor, whom he eyed with the sternest and closest scrutiny, he said, "Old man, disposed as I am to place implicit confidence in the intelligence you have conveyed, what proof have you to adduce that would justify me in acting up to it?"

"If the noble Dharcoor Sahib," returned the stranger, clasping his trembling hands together, "would receive a corroboration of what that letter contains, five kos\* from this he will find it to an extent he little thinks of." And again the feeling of horror, which had previously manifested itself in the agitation visible on his first entering the tent, seemed to shake his whole frame more convulsively than before.

Suddenly he approached Harcourt, and in faltering but distinct accents, whispered something in his ear. The effect was magical; the soldier started back, and in a low, broken voice, expressive of the deepest anguish and sorrow, exclaimed, "Good God! can this possibly be true?"

The old man shook his head. "In two hours time," he said, "you will have no occasion to repeat the question, as you will have convinced

\* A kos is something less than two English miles.

yourself; but darkness is around us, Dharcour Sahib; time to us at this moment is what gold is to the world; and each minute that passes is a loss that cannot be repaired. My lord's resolution I am to conclude is taken?"

"It is," replied Harcourt, and seizing his sabre and placing his pistols in his belt, he threw his cloak over his shoulders, and followed his guide from the tent. They moved forward swiftly and silently, and entering the lines of the general bazaar, passed out at the extremity, a few paces from which was situated the river, upon whose banks the encampment had been pitched. The night was fortunately extremely dark, and as they neared the line of the watchful and vigilant sentinels, the summons to stand and for one of the party to advance and show himself, was answered by the native. In this manner they proceeded without molestation, and descending the bank of the stream, found a small boat in readiness, on entering which, it was immediately pushed off from the shore, the men in charge of it propelling it with the utmost rapidity towards the opposite side. On arriving there, they found a horse ready saddled and accoutred in the native style, and a stout, strong, ambling pony of the description

usually ridden by merchants, bankers, and others occupied in peaceful professions. Whispering to Harcourt that he was to ride the first, the old man mounted the second, and leading the way, they both rode off at a sharp, brisk rate, which soon left the encampment far behind them.

After a ride of rather more than two hours they came to a large village, which the soldier recognised as one containing in its neighbourhood a summer-house and gardens belonging to the Maharajah, a place which, accompanied by his Zenana, he was formerly in the habit of often frequenting, though of late his visits there had been discontinued. All was still as they approached; the inhabitants, even at that early hour, being apparently buried in profound slumber. His guide reined up as they reached the outskirts, and requesting Harcourt on no account to stir from the spot, dismounted from his pony, and fastening the bridle to a tree that was near, left him alone.

He was absent for some time, and a slight degree of suspicion had begun to arise in the Englishman's mind, when the man returned, desiring him also to leave his horse, and follow him. His guide bent his steps towards a choultry about fifty yards distant, situated in the midst

of a tope, or grove, on arriving at which, he proceeded to blow into a flame a torch that he carried in his hand. He had however scarcely accomplished this before his whole frame shook with such visible agitation, that he almost let it fall.

"The illustrious Dharcoor Sahib," he at length said with a faltering voice, "has asked me for proof of what I have asserted; let him then enter this foul den of treachery and murder, and satisfy himself with his own eyes of the truth of the hideous history I have related to him."

With a feeling of sickening horror which he could not dispel, Harcourt followed the old man into the interior of the building, but had scarcely proceeded a dozen steps, before his very feet seemed rooted to the ground, as they splashed in a perfect stream of human gore, while before him, covered with innumerable wounds, lay the lifeless bodies of Ryan, and two other of his brother officers, all of whom were English.

The soldier felt his brain reeling, though he could not withdraw his gaze from the frightful, ghastly spectacle he beheld. From the position in which the unfortunate victims lay, they had evidently been murdered as they slept; worn out in all probability by fatigue, which enabled the assassins to steal upon them without creating any alarm, as there was

no vestige whatever of any struggle having occurred, and the sword even of one of them, which their destroyers had forgotten in their haste, lay undrawn by the side of its unfortunate owner!

As Harcourt leaned against a pillar for support, the old man, casting a mournful glance upon the terrible sight presented to their view, said with tears streaming from his eyes, "Ah! Dharcoor Sahib, noble and unsuspecting themselves, they were too late sensible of the wiles of the false and treacherous tyrant they had served but too well; and yet it was thought they were warned in time,—but murder, when actuated by the most fiendish malice, and prompted by that spirit of fear and distrust, the absence of which it cannot appreciate in others, is ever beforehand with its victim. Convinced of their danger, and of the treachery intended them, they fled in hopes of finding a temporary shelter with you, till they could gain the British frontier, unaware that you yourself were the object of the bitterest rancour to the Maharajah. Overpowered with fatigue, for they had ridden nearly eighty miles without food or rest, and arrived within this short distance of your camp, deeming themselves in safety at least for some hours, they lay down to obtain a short respite of repose. Almost in the first moment of their slumber, their



murderers stole upon them, and one who was on the road, bound with all speed upon the errand of your own preservation, witnessed the departure of the assassins, as, all covered with the blood of their victims, and taking with them their horses, and whatever other plunder they had been able to collect, they hurried from the village. The horrified struck spectator continued his journey with all the rapidity which fear could dictate, and on his arrival in camp, hastily communicated to me the fearful scene he had witnessed, as well as the measures which had been taken for securing your own safety. But come, Sahib, this is no place now for us : before morning you must be miles away, or destruction will await not only yourself, but—but—many others besides."

He gently touched Harcourt by the arm, who still remained with his gaze enchained, fascinated by the dreadful spectacle before him : rousing himself however from his stupor, he staggered after his guide, almost unconscious where his footsteps led him. The old man proceeded towards the gardens of the Maharajah which we have already referred to, and on arriving at the wall, he listened attentively for a few moments, and then opening a small postern door, he motioned to Harcourt to follow him :

Swiftly but cautiously they moved towards the

house, in which a light glimmered at one of the windows only, apparently satisfied with which, the native approached the verandah in its front, where stood a palanquin packed and arranged as if for a journey. "The greatest of the perils," he said, addressing Harcourt, "which surrounded you, Dharcour Sahib, are now passed away: they were many and imminent, and such as you, perhaps, unaccustomed to Mahratta duplicity and treachery, would scarcely comprehend. To whose exertions your safety has been owing, should all things terminate as prosperously as they have begun, you will one day know; in the mean time the rest of the journey before you must be completed in this," pointing to the palanquin, "which, throughout the whole period, is on no account to be opened, even during the night, but kept carefully closed, except on such occasions as it may be set down during the relief of the bearers; when for a given time you will find yourself alone. Any infringement of these instructions will not only be productive of instantaneous destruction to yourself, but incur the risk of being equally fatal to those, who have hazarded life, and more than life, to preserve you from that doom which has so unhappily befallen your friends and countrymen."

He assisted Harcourt to enter the palanquin as he spoke; the latter having during this period altogether recovered his courage and presence of mind, which instinctively assured him that following the counsel and directions of his guide was the only course for him now to pursue. Having placed himself in the conveyance, and disposed his sabre and pistols so as to be ready to his hand at a moment's warning, he awaited the result of what was subsequently to follow, as the old man, closing the door, and repeating emphatically the word "Remember!" immediately afterwards quitted him.

Within a quarter of an hour after his departure the light of torches was seen and the sound of human voices heard approaching, which Harcourt conjectured proceeded from the bearers who were to carry him on his journey. His surmise proved correct, as the palanquin was almost immediately lifted up and he was borne rapidly away. Throughout the night his route continued, the men being changed at each stage with the rapidity of magic; at times it struck him he heard the clatter of hoofs at a short distance, expressive of a body of horsemen being either in pursuit or following the vehicle as an escort, but the sound was indistinct, and as they came not near, nor seemed in any way to gain upon them, it was evident the

former supposition was unfounded, and twice only when the palanquin was placed on the ground, and he opened the doors of the conveyance, for the purpose of breathing the fresh air in greater freedom than could be afforded by the half-closed lattice, Harcourt, as the old man had previously apprised him, found himself wholly alone, the blaze of the torches and the voices of the bearers invariably warning him of their approaching return.

A short period before day-break, as far as he could judge, he felt the blood rush to his heart, and then course fiercely through his veins, as the conviction forced itself upon his mind, that he was in the midst of a large body of troops proceeding upon a service, of the nature of which he felt too well assured. It was evident, however, that the vehicle which conveyed him, everywhere inspired the highest degree of respect, as the ranks were opened, and way promptly made for its advance upon the instant, though in what this feeling originated it was impossible for him to conceive.

As morning dawned he was enabled to observe the interior of the conveyance in which he reclined, which was not only most luxurious, but gorgeous in the extreme. The lining was of rich figured yellow damask, fringed with gold embroidery, with pillows, and rezyes, or coverlets of the finest

cachemire, of a similar colour; it was different in construction from those generally in use among Europeans, being much broader, more commodious, and made of much lighter materials: he was also partially enabled to discover that the exterior was covered with a profusion of gilding, the whole expressive of its having belonged to some person of the highest rank and station. On the roof was a light silk network in which were placed papers of dried fruits, and a description of rusk, or biscuit, which were evidently intended as provisions for the journey.

For two successive days and nights the route continued, Harcourt wearying himself in the effort to discover who was the being to whose unaccountable interest in his welfare he had been so much indebted, and vainly endeavouring to arrive at some probable solution, as to how his present singular adventure was to terminate. As the evening closed in of the second day of his journey, and darkness was falling, the palanquin entered the suburbs of what was evidently a large and populous city. It proceeded for some time through a variety of by-streets, occasionally crossing some wide and well-lighted bazaar—the busy hum of which announced the flourishing energy and activity of its commerce—and then it entered a vaulted archway, at

which, from the clang of arms which fell upon his ear, and the sound of the measured tread of the sentinels, it was evident a military guard was stationed. Passing onward, it apparently moved through several courts, in one of which it was set down, a voice almost immediately afterwards commanding the bearers to withdraw.

There was a period of silence of some moments, during which Harcourt was led to believe he heard a suppressed whispering ; then there was the sound of a door opening close beside him, a hand was laid upon that of the palanquin, and a female voice exclaimed, " Let the noble Surdur\* enter without distrust and suspicion, since all danger and hazards are at an end as long as he remains within these walls."

Harcourt stepped out, and then became aware that he was within the precincts of a court belonging to some very large and extensive native building, evidently the residence of a person of high rank or great wealth, and close to a door leading to a narrow staircase, at the entrance of which stood an elderly female, partially veiled, bearing a light, and who, as soon as he appeared, beckoned to him to follow. The Englishman complied without the

\* A term signifying a Military Chief, or Commander of high rank.

slightest hesitation ; and passing through the opening, they ascended to what seemed to be a square gallery, extending round the sides of an inner court, the balustrades of which were of curiously antique carving in teak-wood, almost black by age. Branching from this, at one of the angles at the extremity, was a broad passage, apparently leading to other apartments, from several doors opening into it, and at one of these his guide stopped. Touching a lock or spring, it rolled back upon its hinges, and revealed a small but handsomely furnished chamber, adorned with every description of Eastern luxury and splendour.

Accosting him in imperfect Hindostanee, the female now gave Harcourt to understand that the suite of rooms—of which the present one formed the sleeping apartment—was to be his abode for some time ; and that irksome as such a confinement must be to him, he must on no account seek to go beyond them, as in doing so, he would not only entail certain death upon himself, but cause the ruin and destruction of many other innocent persons, including those through whose influence and exertions his own life had been preserved ;—that his sole attendant, during this interval, would be herself, to whom had been assigned the duty of



being near him, to answer to his slightest commands; and that every effort would be made during his stay to render his seclusion as agreeable as such a state could permit.

In saying this—having made a reverential oriental salutation—she withdrew, leaving the soldier alone. Left to himself, Harcourt for a moment glanced round the apartment, which was lighted with perfumed oil from a large silver lamp. Overcome, however, by the fatigue of his journey (for oppressed with anxiety and anguish during its continuance, he had scarcely closed his eyes throughout the whole period), he undressed, and despite the perplexing nature of his present situation, its mystery, and, perhaps, its danger, he threw himself upon a charpoy, and was soon buried in profound repose.

His slumber was evidently of a deep and lengthened character; as the next morning, when he awoke, the sun was streaming brightly through the lattice of the chamber. He started up; a strain of soft sweet music seemed to ring upon his ear, and for some moments he was doubtful of the reality of all that had passed. The reminiscences of the last few days, however, quickly and vividly recurred to his mind, and as he sprang from his couch, he became sensible of the nature of his position.



The music he had heard proceeded from a handsome ormolu French clock, chiming the hour of eight; and the air it played—a pretty little romance which he well remembered having heard in former days—caused him to press his hand tightly to his heart, as if endeavouring to keep down the aching and spasmodic emotion that arose within him. Almost in the same instant his attendant of the preceding evening entered the apartment, bearing a tray containing the bread, fruit, and other suitable refreshments, forming the usual oriental meal of the morning.

Having placed these on a low inlaid table, she again withdrew; and the soldier found himself once more alone. Left to his own reflections, Harcourt turned his attention towards examining his chamber, which excited within him no less curiosity than surprise; and in the richness which distinguished it, he had certainly never met with anything similar throughout his Eastern career; though he called to mind having frequently heard it asserted that the houses of the omrahs, or nobles, and opulent natives, often exhibited in their interior (to which few persons beyond their own immediate family circle were ever admitted), a degree of luxury and splendour, very different to the plain and unadorned style observable in their apartments

usually devoted to the reception of visitors or the transaction of business ; for these, as far as he had observed, formed a singular contrast to the room he now occupied, which, though small, exhibited a perfect picture of oriental elegance and richness.

The doors and lattices were of deeply and beautifully carved dark wood, inlaid with mother-of-pearl and every variety of coloured ivory, blending in character with the walls and ceiling, which were covered with a profusion of gilding, intermixed with brightly-painted birds and flowers, in all the gay and brilliant colouring of the East. The floor was carpeted with the choicest productions of the various looms of Hindostan, carelessly scattered over which were several cushions of sky-blue satin, embroidered in gold ; and in various niches in the wall were several very valuable French clocks, of the style generally known as Louis Quatorze ; but with the exception of what we have mentioned, and the small table and charpoy upon which Harcourt had slept during the night, the apartment was destitute of furniture, in the European acceptance of the term. These two last-named articles were of wood, covered with thick plates of massive silver, carved in workmanship of the most highly-finished description, while the bedding and cover-

lets of the latter were formed of shawls of the finest cachemire.

Leading from this chamber was a small bathing room, with water placed in vessels of earthenware, and large folds of linen ready for immediate use; while at the opposite extremity it opened upon one much larger, of a character similar to the first, and round which ran a gallery of fretwork, reaching within a few feet of the ceiling. In this apartment Harcourt found writing materials, and, somewhat to his astonishment, several French works, more than half a century old, and which, apparently placed there as a source of recreation to himself, had in all probability once belonged to those earlier gallant French adventurers, whose presence was everywhere welcomed throughout Central India, under the power and influence of the renowned and celebrated Bussy (the French Clive), till the genius and brilliant talents of that great soldier and statesman became neutralized by the mean jealousy of Lally, a feeling which led to those reverses that ultimately terminated in the downfall of the empire of his countrymen in the East, and in consigning himself to the scaffold.

On preparing to dress, he found that during the night his clothes had been removed, and a plain but rich Mahratta costume substituted in their

place. His arms, however, remained; and satisfied of the necessity for the change, considering the peculiar nature of his present situation, he at once assumed the dress that had evidently been left for the purpose. The day glided away without his seeing any one but the female slave we have already adverted to, who, ever watchful and on the alert to comply with his slightest wishes, appeared studiously to avoid anything like a prolonged conversation with him, which her real or affected ignorance of the Hindostanee language rendered her the more easily able to elude, though, apparently, readily comprehending the meaning of any want which he occasionally gave expression to. Harcourt's only resource, therefore, lay in the books we have mentioned, the contents of which, unfortunately, were not altogether of a nature likely to prove attractive for any lengthened period.

In this manner hours, days, the space of nearly three weeks had passed over, and Harcourt had begun to feel impatient under the restraint he was compelled to endure, and, indeed, in some measure to find his health fail, in consequence of a mode of existence so wholly different from what his previous active life had been accustomed to. This was apparently observed, as one morning, when in the larger chamber, a letter was dropped from the

gallery above, which alighted at his feet. As he picked it up, he saw at a glance it was in the same handwriting as the two previous communications which had reached him, and on opening it read the following words:—

“Have patience; your confinement draws towards a conclusion; but the clouds which hovered round you, threatening destruction on every side, though they are dispersed, have not yet altogether subsided. The search after you has been long-continued and unremitting, having been conducted with all the skill, cunning, and malignity which baffled hate and the most persevering enmity could dictate, rendering the discovery of any other place of refuge than the one in which you have found shelter sure and certain. That sanctuary has been found under the roof of your bitterest enemy, *in the very Zenana of Holkar himself*, who little dreams that the foe he pursues to death with such unrelenting perseverance, as the being who has destroyed his long-cherished visions, alike of vengeance and ambition—each night rests in peace and security under the same dwelling as himself!”

It would be difficult to pourtray the feelings of astonishment with which Harcourt perused this singular and unexpected epistle. That he owed

his preservation to some extraordinary exertion of female influence was now plainly manifest: but to whose counsels and guidance could he ascribe the prudence, daring, and skilful ability, which had effected so successful a result in an enterprise fraught with such imminent peril to all engaged in its execution? It was in vain he tried to arrive at any solution of the question connected with this adventure, which was only rendered the more remarkable from the extraordinary degree of fidelity and secrecy which must have been observed in conducting it.

It was a short time only after this occurrence that, one night, Harcourt, having dismissed his attendant, had retired to rest, when he was aroused from slumber by the sounds of a confused uproar and disturbance, which, distant at first, seemed to grow more distinct in its nearer approach to his own chamber. He started up, unable in any way to account for this extraordinary contrast to the usual quietude and stillness which, up to this period, had so universally prevailed around him. Suddenly the confusion appeared greatly to increase, and became intermingled with wild cries of alarm, accompanied by piercing screams.

Harcourt sprang towards his arms, and with a

pistol in one hand, and his sabre in the other, he awaited the *denouement* of what was about to occur. He was not long left in doubt, as the door of his apartment suddenly, but quietly opening, gave to view the person of his attendant, accompanied by three other females, closely veiled, who remained without, while one of them exclaimed, in a voice which it struck the Englishman at the time was not unfamiliar to his ear, "Quick, quick! the hour has arrived, and he must leave on the instant!"

Swiftly, but half mechanically, the soldier followed their footsteps, and passing through the gallery, and down the staircase into the court below, which we have already adverted to, they hurried across it, and from thence successively into several others. On every side they encountered groups of terrified women flying with alarm, which, as they reached the exterior buildings of the palace, became intermingled with men, while cries which, suppressed at first, became every moment louder in their exclamation, continually arose of, "Maharajah dewanee hoguya!" ("The sovereign has gone mad.")

Upon entering a large square, in the centre of which was a broad gateway, where a military guard was stationed who were now under arms, the



party turned down towards a small door at the opposite extremity. It proved to be open, and, passing through, they found themselves beyond the walls of the palace, around which a dense crowd had now begun to assemble. They made their way without the least hindrance, or being in any way questioned; the populace being too anxiously occupied to notice them, as the vague rumours everywhere circulated relative to what was the cause of the confusion which prevailed, led to the impression that some hostile movement, or endeavour to plunder the bazaars of the city would be attempted,—a not unusual occurrence in Indian capitals, when scenes of a similar description have occurred.

On emerging from the throng, the party proceeded rapidly through the city, avoiding the larger and more populous streets, and passing down those which, at this late hour, were either silent or deserted. After some time they reached the suburbs, and found themselves in the open country, not far from the high road. Retreating from the last, they struck across some fields, the women increasing their pace at times to a run, and at length arrived at what appeared a ruined mosque, situated in the midst of some trees, where stood several palanquins with their bearers in readiness, attended by a small body of horsemen, whose lances were planted in



the ground by their chargers' heads, the animals being bridled and saddled, with the reins hanging loosely over the shoulders of their riders, as if on the watch to move at a minute's notice.

"Now is our time," said the same voice which Harcourt had previously heard, and one of the females, approaching him, pointed to the nearest palanquin, as if intimating by the motion that he was to enter it;—"We have a long journey before us, and it is best that we reach the place of our destination with all speed, as there is no knowing what the events of this night may eventually give rise to."\*

The Englishman entered the conveyance, which

\* The night here alluded to must be the same as that described in Sir John Malcolm's History of Central India, wherein he mentions, that the insanity of Holkar—of which premonitory warnings had long previously appeared—all at once burst forth in the most outrageous frenzy, and was first discovered to the people of the capital by the ladies of the Zenana and the whole of its inmates rushing from the palace in the dead of the night, frantic with terror, and declaring that the Maharajah had attempted to murder several of them. After some consultation among his ministers, a party of soldiers was ordered into the interior apartments, where the unhappy prince was found endeavouring to secrete himself. He was overpowered and secured, though not without considerable difficulty, as, owing to his great personal strength, it required the utmost exertions on the part of the whole guard to master him, when he was obliged to be pinioned like a wild beast. No lucid interval, it would appear, ever afterwards revisited him.

was promptly lifted from the ground, the horsemen sprang into their saddles, and the whole cavalcade moved off with as much rapidity as their mode of travelling admitted, a guarded silence being maintained even for a long time after the capital had been left behind them.

For three nights and two days the journey continued almost without intermission, the relays of bearers being apparently vigilantly on the watch, and no time lost in changing them. Twice only, during the heat of the day, the palanquins were put down, at which period Harcourt always found himself alone, with the exception of two or three of the horsemen who were in attendance upon him for the purpose of procuring anything he required; though he could perceive, at no great distance, and generally withdrawn from view as much as possible, several other conveyances of a similar nature, which were evidently accompanying him on his route.

On the morning of the third day, as dawn was just visible above the horizon, they passed a broad and rapid river, which, from the features of the country upon its banks, appearing in some measure familiar to his memory, Harcourt guessed to be the Nerbudda; that stream forming the eastern boundary of Holkar's dominions between

the British territory and the state of Bhopal. On landing on the opposite side, after a further continuance of their route between three and four miles, the loud shouts of the bearers, the usual intimation of their being near the end of their journey, caused the Englishman to look out, when he became aware of their approaching a small encampment, situated in a thick grove of trees near a large village. In a few minutes more, amid the cries of "Ram, ram!"\* as the conveyance was set down, he found himself surrounded with all his old servants, who had evidently been awaiting him, and who now greeted their master's presence and safe return with an applause and sincerity of feeling, the more remarkable from Harcourt's bearing towards them; which, while never harsh, imperious, or even insulting, as is too often the case with Europeans in regard to natives, in its cold and reserved exterior, presented a marked contrast to that respectful familiarity ever found subsisting between the French and their dependents, which, in its consequences, has often been productive of advantages to them in many countries

\* An exclamation expressive of "bravo," or "well done," common among the natives of India, and usually given utterance to by palanquin-bearers on the termination of a journey, or after a very long and fatiguing stage.

besides India, that their English rivals are very little aware of.

Almost, however, before he could acknowledge the greeting of his dependents, the soldier became sensible of a singular feeling which pervaded his whole frame, the force and intensity of which seemed to overpower him on the instant. He tried to speak, but his tongue failed him; his entire form seemed palsied by cold,—his teeth chattered like castanets,—while liquid fire appeared pouring through every vessel in his brain. In the next moment he sunk upon the ground, and a few hours afterwards lay stretched upon his couch, in all the danger and delirium of one of the worst fevers of the country.

## CHAPTER III.

FOR days and weeks Harcourt remained in a most precarious state, hovering between life and death. His whole existence was a world of dreams, in which fearful visions of the past became intermingled with fantastic ideas relative to the present, alternating, in the various stages of the dangerous disorder which had seized him, between the phrensy of delirium, and that utter prostration of mental and bodily strength, which places even the most trifling exertion beyond the remotest possibility of being attempted.

And yet sometimes he would task his mind to the utmost, in the endeavour to remember what was passing around him, though all that he could recal was the appearance of a middle-aged, intelligent looking man, an European, who at times stood by his bedside, and spoke to him both in French and English,—succeeded by what he deemed the feverish phantasy of his own dis-

ordered vision, in the form of several female figures clad in the flowing drapery of the East, who seemed to glide like spirits with noiseless tread around him. During this period the heated volcano that pressed upon the brain apparently never ceased for an instant, even when the agonized frame became blue in its fleshy colouring, from the violence of the cold which at intervals paralysed its entire being.

Thus time passed on. One clear, bright afternoon, after a prolonged and unusually severe extent of suffering, the invalid had sunk into a profound slumber, in the course of which a marked and decided change seemed to take place in the progress of his malady. Deeper and yet deeper that slumber continued, until the apparent loneliness of the solitude which reigned around, appeared to steep the senses of the sleeper into the most absolute oblivion, engendering a feeling of tranquillity and repose, that was still not altogether without some degree of consciousness, which seemed to create, in its ideal hemisphere, a thin transparent mist, that filled the entire space in which he lay, the prelude to a cool, gentle breeze that issued from it, imparting a sense of delicious freshness to the seared brain, and wearied, fevered form of the sufferer. He felt that influence he had

once before experienced amid the pestilential marshes of the African coast, though unlike then, he heard nothing, saw nothing, though he knew that that same unseen and hidden spirit was extending its benign and soothing power over him, in clearing his mind from the phantasies which oppressed it. And for hours this deep and prolonged sleep continued, and so calm and tranquil was its nature, that a spectator might almost have been led to believe the spirit of life had passed away from its earthly tenement.

It was towards the approach of one of those bright and gorgeous Eastern sunsets, that after a period of upwards of three weeks' suffering, Harcourt first awoke to consciousness, and gazed for a moment in doubt and bewilderment upon the scene which immediately presented itself to his view, which almost rendered him disposed to question the reality of the events of the last two months, and to consider them as the mere chimeras of a disordered imagination, consequent upon his illness. He was in his own tent, a very large and handsome one, forming one of an entire suite, lined with red cloth, which had been presented to him by Jeswunt Row only a twelvemonth previous, when he was in the height of his favour with the Maharajah: the furniture was exactly the same as he

left it the night of the murder of his comrades, when the mysterious warning he had received alone saved him from a similar fate,—his arms, books, everything appeared in exactly the same position, no change whatever apparently having taken place since then, with the exception that without, the usual stir of a camp had now given place to the most profound stillness.

What we have described was visible to the Englishman at a glance, on his first restoration to a sense of what was passing around him, but on attempting to raise his voice, or even to turn himself upon his couch, he found himself so utterly debilitated by weakness, as to be wholly incapable of the one, and scarcely able with the utmost difficulty to effect the other. He had, however, after considerable exertion accomplished the last, before he became aware of *one* object in the tent, which at first had escaped him, and the sight of which half led him to believe that even now he was still under the delusion of some disordered vision.

Seated by his bedside, on a large cushion, was a very young and beautiful native girl, whose years seemed scarcely to have passed the boundaries of childhood. She was fast asleep, with her head leaning against the side of the couch, and it was evident from her deep and almost breathless repose,



as well as the weariness and exhaustion portrayed upon her features, that slumber had stolen upon her senses when oppressed, and no longer able to bear up against the spirit of fatigue which had overpowered her. She was exquisitely lovely, the eyes were firmly closed in the deep Lethean trance in which she was buried, but the long dark silken lashes rested in their jetty fringe upon the downy rounded cheek, the complexion of which, of the hue and fairness of that Arab race inhabiting the range of the Alpuxarras (the mountain land, skirting the rich garden province of Grenada), was rendered the more glowing by the slightest tinge of colour, which in its peach-like brightness seemed to enhance the expression of her features to more perfect beauty. The finely cut lips were half open, revealing teeth which in their pearly whiteness rivalled the ivory of Serendeb;\* the beautiful head lay upon one rounded arm which equalled that of a Phidian statue, while the other hung listlessly by her side; but the hands and unslipperd feet,—they were so small, they seemed actually almost infantile in their petite fairy-like proportions.

As Harcourt gazed bewildered upon the bright vision seated near him, he was for the moment half

\* Ceylon.

disposed to give credit to the Eastern legends he had heard, relative to the Gins and Peris which occasionally visited the earth, particularly when after his first astonishment had passed away, his attention was turned towards her costume, which consisted of a flowing drapery of white muslin, completely enshrouding the figure, leaving only the lower part of her crimson silk peijamas, or trousers exposed to view. In contrast to this simplicity, however, jewels of apparently great value, were mingled in the dark braids of her jet black clustering hair, which, parted in front, fell in thick masses over her shoulders, while around her finely-moulded, delicate, swan-like neck, was a pearl necklace, the beads of which were of uncommon size, the clasp that held them being composed of one large diamond of the most lustrous beauty.

Lost in wonder, the Englishman closed his eyes, to shut out what he believed to be an object created by his still fevered and excited imagination. On re-opening them, however, they again fell upon the fair vision seated as before, so still, so motionless, his thoughts might well have led him to believe it was a being of another sphere that he beheld before him. He tried to speak, in hopes that his voice would dispel the illusion, but either through weakness, or perhaps an ill-defined feeling par-

taking in some measure of superstitious awe, created by long and continued illness, his voice failed him, and the words he would have spoken, seemed almost suppressed as they rose to his lips.

Suddenly he heard a low and distinct voice behind him, which in guarded and cautious tones said,—  
“Meet-ha—Meet-ha, my child, you have fallen asleep in so obstinately adhering to the determination of continuing your watch, when the Hukeem Sahib \* told you it was beyond your strength, after so many successive days and nights of a similar duty, and that you would only injure your own health in doing so.”

Harcourt had half closed his eyes as these words reached him, but he saw the beautiful being spring to her feet with the grace and agility of an antelope, and placing her finger on her lips, reply in the same subdued tone,—“Mother, what the Hukeem Sahib foretold, has been already accomplished; his sleep has been prolonged up to this period without the slightest suffering, the crisis has arrived, and our noble preserver will be saved, as throughout the whole period since the opiate was administered, nought but the utmost tranquillity has prevailed, all raving and delirium has ceased, and it was perhaps the effect of this unusual silence that lulled

\* Physician.

my own senses to repose, when I should have been vigilant and watchful."

"At least no evil has resulted from the circumstance," was the reply; and the soldier became aware that a second female had entered the tent; whom he could perceive to be a person of tall and commanding figure, of middle age, and whose relationship to the younger one it would have been easy to determine, had not the address of the latter proclaimed the tie which existed between them.

"It wants still an hour to the period when the Hukeem Sahib mentioned the patient might be awakened, should he be unable to be with us at the period he anticipated," continued the elder lady, "and he yet slumbers in the deep lethargy caused by past suffering; but now that there is some chance of his restoration to healthful life, tell me, Meet-ha, what will this man be to you?"

The young girl cast down her eyes, a bright crimson flush suffused her features, which was succeeded by an expression of acute pain, followed by the most deadly paleness. After some time she seemed to subdue her emotion, and replied in low but firm accents—"Mother, we have discharged our duty to our benefactor and preserver,—to him who saved us from a fate we dare not even think of."

“That obligation at least has been required in the active and continued exertions which have twice snatched him from the very jaws of destruction. Whose influence but your own could have persuaded your father’s Soucar,\* old Ram Dass, timid and fearful as he is, to undertake the office of proceeding to his camp, and settling himself there as a banyan, to warn him of his danger, and circumvent it when he arrived, which his extraordinary means of intelligence alone enabled him to effect? Who but yourself could have induced your father’s devoted and faithful retainers to enter upon a service that must inevitably have sacrificed not only their own lives, but ours, to the despot’s wrath, had but the most trifling suspicion been entertained, that the palanquin they escorted to Indore, not only violated the sacred precincts of the Zenana, but actually contained the enemy he had sought for with such unrelenting and implacable perseverance. I speak not of your attendance at his bedside during the past month, as however compromising it may have been in the eyes of our people, as equally unbecoming our race, rank, and station, gratitude may not only have justified, but sanctified the act; though now that this duty has every prospect of being brought to a termination, let

\* Banker.

me repeat the question I have before put to you, What further interest will this stranger possess for you?"

There was a pause of some minutes, which was again broken by the elder lady saying sternly, "Girl, remember who and what you are, and think not to disguise from me what your true feelings are: gratitude for services rendered is indeed an obligation of the holiest nature, and one to which our race have never been indifferent, but it seldom leads to the reckless hazardous risks in which you have involved not only yourself, but all around you; emblem indeed of that wayward, yet noble blood, which adhered to an outlawed chief, in preference to accepting the rank, wealth, and dignities, which were proffered to his acceptance by the greatest rulers of Hindostan."

"Mother," said the young girl softly, yet proudly, and steadfastly regarding her parent, "did *he*, whose fortunes my gallant father adhered to in all their bitterness and adversity, did he in the period of his power and greatness, even when a terror to all around him, ever forget what he owed to his brave and loyal soldier? At his fall, who directed the arm and spirit which avenged him? who sheltered the orphan under his own roof as his most cherished, honoured, and royal guest? who secured to her the wealth she inherited, and added largely

to its substance,—who but the prince he had so nobly, so faithfully served?”

“Were you mindful of these benefits, Meet-ha,” replied the elder lady, “when you incurred the risk of blighting your name and honour, however innocent, and sacrificing yourself as well as the lives of the most devoted adherents of your family, in sheltering the enemy of that being to whom you declare you owe so much?”

“Mother,” returned her daughter calmly, “of all the great and manifold services my father ever rendered to the Maharajah Jeswunt Row Holkar, none have ever exceeded that conferred by his child, in rescuing her benefactor’s name and memory—for alas! both fame and name in regard to him now are of the past, from the stain of the blackest treachery, the foulest, the most ungrateful baseness, exercised too towards one, whom we were bound by every human tie and feeling to revere.”

“Under his auspices,” said the mother sadly, “you might have entered into the marriage state, in a manner becoming your birth and station, but all was rejected, and now, among the Rajahpoot nobles and princes, think you no other motives will be attached to what has recently transpired, than those which have actuated you, which will wholly preclude such an event?”

"Mother," replied the young girl firmly, "none know better than yourself, that the heart and affections of the Rajahpootné are rarely lightly, and never unworthily bestowed. Who gave herself to the brave and noble and yet then impoverished and outlawed Bulwunt Sing? and who has since said, time after time, even when weeping with anguish for his untimely fate, "were life to be renewed, my choice should ever be the same?" Be not unjust then with me, that I equally participate in this feeling of our race, for believe me, sooner would I become a Suttee,\* than give myself to one unworthy of my father's honoured name."

The elder lady gazed steadfastly and fixedly upon her daughter. "Your affections, then," she said after a slight pause, "are irrevocably, irrevocably given to this unknown stranger?"

A stream of sunshine at this instant poured into the tent, and falling upon the countenance of the young girl, seemed to lighten it into an absolute glow of deep, intense burning crimson, as casting down her eyes, she murmured—"The Rajahpootné has been sought in marriage by the Mahomedan Sovereigns of Delhi, who have deemed themselves honoured in such an alliance."

"True, Meet-ha, but they were princes and rulers

\* Mount the funeral pile.



in the land, and mingling their blood with that of our race was of advantage to both, and to the people over whom they reigned. But when has the European ever formed any ties of a holy and binding nature in this country? He stands a class apart—if you will, the lord, the absorbing conqueror of all with whom he is brought in contact, yet ever still in the midst of all the sects, castes, and people that surround him, the same isolated being, here for a time, and then away to his own far western land of Frangestan; beside, know you aught as to who or what this stranger is?"

"His soldiers used to say, they had heard he was of a high and noble race in his own land, but he is brave and honourable, and one whose name and deeds are a theme in the mouths of every one, as emblematic of the gallant soldier, the just and beneficent ruler."

"That he is all that you describe, I am well aware, and believe also there is every possibility of his being what his sepoys have described him; but were he ranked even among the most powerful princes of Frangestan, would that remove the bar that exists between you? Besides, Meet-ha, my child,"—and the elder lady hesitated for a moment,—“have you forgotten what occurred only two days since, when the fever reached its height, and we

then became aware of the real nature of the supposed charm he wears continually round his neck?"

Now indeed a change came over the countenance of the young girl, which once more became pale as ashes, an expression of the acutest anguish overspreading every feature, as with one hand pressed to her side, she caught at a table for support with the other.—"True—true," she murmured, "how beautiful it was!—yet the Hukeem Sahib assured me it was a memorial of the dead."

"Memorials of the dead, my child," replied her mother gravely, "when guarded with so much care, presage but little of affection for the living; there may be—" her daughter's head fell upon her shoulder, the figure of the youthful Princess being stiff and rigid as if locked in the embrace of death.

"Meet-ha! Meet-ha! my child, oh, my child!" exclaimed the agonized parent, "look at me,—only look at me, my beloved one! do what you please, act as you will,—I will accompany you anywhere, to the furthest extremity of the earth. Oh! daughter of my heart, look at me, but once more, my sweetest, and dearest."

"Hush, hush mother!" said the young girl, whom a spirit of alarm seemed to revive; "hush! or you

will awake him," and she pointed towards Harcourt's couch; "remember what the Hukeent Sahib said would be the consequence, in the event of any sudden shock arousing him from his slumber. I am better now, and feel you are right, but what does it not cost me to make the avowal? The marriage state I can never hope to enjoy, but on my noble preserver's recovery, I will transmit him the Rakee,\* and as my bound brother, in his own far

\* Bracelet. Among the Rajapoot tribes, there exists a custom somewhat similar to that prevalent in Europe in the days of chivalry, which authorizes a lady to send to any one she may select, a bracelet, either as a pledge of her esteem for services of the greatest value rendered her, as a demand for assistance, or as an injunction to avenge her, should there exist no possibility of coming to her immediate aid. The person to whom this pledge is forwarded, becomes in the language of the country the "Rakee bund bha'ee," or bracelet-bound brother of the lady by whom it is sent, a tie in the estimation of the Rajapootné, of the holiest and most sacred nature, which even that of blood and consanguinity cannot exceed. Though usually confined to themselves, there is apparently no law rendering it of an exclusive character, as in the annals of India, there are two instances of this gallant distinction having been sent to Mahomedan Princes, who both nobly redeemed the pledge its acceptance was intended to convey. The first was the Emperor Humayoon, the second was one of the earlier Affghan Sovereigns of the northern Deccan. For a detail of the circumstance embodying the tragic and eventful history which led to the former's receipt and adoption of the obligation the bracelet conveyed, the reader is referred to the various Histories of Hindostan, more particularly to that most interesting and able work, Colonel Tod's Rajapootana.

distant and happy land, or wherever he may roam, he will perhaps, sometimes think of the poor Rajah-pootné girl whom he saved, who to the end of life will have every thought of her heart turned towards the remembrance of him." Choking sobs for the moment burst from her bosom ; but almost immediately with wonderful firmness suppressing them, she continued as if wishing to dismiss a subject which had agitated her so much,—“The sun will set ere another half-hour expires, and the Hukeem Sahib will then be here.”

The mother clasped her child to her heart, as if she understood the nature of the appeal these words conveyed, and the utmost silence prevailed throughout the tent.

During the whole of this conversation, Harcourt had been an unwilling listener, and several times had essayed to speak, to let the ladies know that he was aware of their presence, but to such a state of weakness and prostration was he reduced, that each effort he made to raise his voice only seemed to create, if possible, a still greater degree of debility. What with the long illness he had endured, and the effect of the opiate that had been administered, which had again commenced its influence over him, and was gradually sealing his senses in that state of slumber, or torpor rather, from which he had

temporarily awakened, his brain could scarcely altogether comprehend the nature of all that he had heard, although the face and figure of the young beauty had been indelibly impressed upon his memory, as well as the reminiscence of all that she had risked and endured for his sake. As his mind wandered, and he vainly struggled to embody into a distinct form, or clear and explicit train of ideas, the illusions which had reached him, sleep in its heaviest, deepest form, again overtook him, and once more he was buried in profound repose.

In an hour afterwards he again awoke; the shades of evening were closing in, a fresh yet gentle breeze imparted a luxuriant influence throughout the tent, and weakened and prostrate as he yet was, Harcourt could not but be sensible that he was a different being to what he had been, even so short a period previously. The first object he encountered as his eyes unclosed, was the figure of an elderly, benevolent looking man, evidently a medical gentleman, who stood by his bedside, holding his wrist, and the expression of whose countenance was expressive of the satisfaction the renovated state of the invalid afforded him. : "You have had a severe trial," he said to Harcourt, "but the worst is now passed, and we have every reason to hope that, by care and attention,

you will soon be on the road to complete and perfect recovery." I should apologise to you perhaps for using English, were I not led to believe you at least understand, if not speak it."

"I speak it perfectly."

"I am glad to hear it, but for the present must place a most peremptory prohibition upon any conversation taking place, the most absolute quietude being requisite for some days yet. I shall now bid you adieu, but will again see you in the morning, though before my departure will prescribe what I have every expectation will produce a yet further amelioration before I again see you."

He took from the table as he spoke a glass containing a liquid, which to Harcourt appeared a description of lemonade, and the freshness of which seemed to diffuse itself throughout his whole frame. It is not improbable that it contained either some new opiate, or acted upon that already administered; as shortly after its being taken a gentle languor stole over him, and he again sunk into a deep sleep, which continued with scarcely any intermission throughout the entire night; his medical attendant in the morning, on making his promised visit, finding his state of improvement far beyond what his most sanguine expectations could have led him to anticipate.

From this period the health of Harcourt continued progressively to return, and after a few days he was permitted to have some conversation with his kind physician,—the only person he saw, with the exception of one or two confidential domestics, especially directed by the latter to wait upon him; all others belonging to his household, or whoever else might be near him, being rigidly excluded from the tent by the latter's orders, and the receipt of all notes, letters, or communications of any kind being inflexibly prohibited, to guard against all chance of any relapse occurring. From this gentleman Harcourt learned every particular relative to his recent illness. He was the surgeon of the English Civil Station, about two miles distant, and had received a sudden summons to attend upon a French officer of distinction, who had fallen dangerously ill while journeying from the capital of Holkar, whose service he had quitted, in consequence of the anarchy and troubles that had ensued upon that prince's malady, which was now pronounced to be wholly beyond relief. On hastening to the spot, he found the officer in question labouring under the influence of one of the worst and most dangerous attacks of jungle fever, and—and—and—. The good Doctor here evidently became extremely embarrassed, and ap-



parently earnestly wished to discontinue his narrative.

Harcourt fixed his sunken yet keen eyes upon him as he said calmly, "Go on, Sir, I beseech you; if I mistake not, there are two ladies to whom I am greatly indebted not only for your own invaluable assistance, but for what has materially tended towards my present restoration and recovery."

"By Heaven!" returned Dr. Lurgan warmly, "you owe everything to one, who, if ever there was an angel upon earth, she is one.—Oh! the devil!" he muttered in alarm, "now for a scene, I suppose."

But while apparently listening with extreme interest, his patient exhibited none of the excitement the physician had anticipated, and as Harcourt observed the latter still hesitated, he again said,—  
"Pray proceed, let me entreat you."

"Well, Sir," continued the Doctor, "as I am led to believe I can pursue my narrative without danger to yourself, I may mention that on my arrival here, much to my surprise, I was accosted by two native ladies, evidently of high rank, who, in the utmost distress and agitation, implored me to save you. The state of despair of the youngest, I am free to confess, profoundly impressed me. She was, I think, really the most beautiful creature I ever saw; and as she threw herself at my



feet, proffered to my acceptance jewels of apparently the rarest and greatest value, only conjuring me to preserve the life of her benefactor, as she termed you. I endeavoured to soothe and console her by every means in my power, but, in good sooth, scarcely knew what to say, as a glance was almost sufficient to intimate the dangerous nature of the malady which had seized you. I could therefore only refer to their own favourite doctrine of the Kismet\* (destiny), and observe that the fate of all upon earth rested with a far higher power, before which the Hindoo and European alike must bow, but that, as regarded myself, no exertions on my own part should be wanting to accomplish a result that would afford me equal pleasure with herself.

"In some measure tranquillized by my assurances, vague as they were, her grief became calmer; and constituting herself your head-nurse, from that period up to the present, when I pronounced you beyond all danger, she has scarcely ever moved from your bedside; entreaties, remonstrance, all warnings of danger which might occur from infection, being alike unavailing in inducing her to withdraw from her self-imposed duty; and as to threats, which, as a

\* Kismet, or Nusseeb. This, though the Mussulman doctrine, is also peculiar to the Hindoos.

last resource, were had recourse to,—egad! the young lady quickly manifested that, sweet and gentle as she appeared, there lurks in her no slight portion of the spirit of her race; and the fire which flashed from her large dark eyes at the intimation at once precluded all chance of its repetition.

“On being appealed to myself, I deemed it best to indulge her, as the lesser evil of the two, since when the human mind, in an excited and unhealthy state, is resolutely bent upon pursuing any particular object, it is far better to let it take its course; lest in seeking to prevent the consequences which may arise from its indulgence, we create others of a much more serious nature and greater magnitude than those we wish to avoid.

“It was not till some days after that I learned the cause of this feeling towards you, from one of her people, who mount guard over you as if in the midst of an enemy’s camp—which it would appear is derived from the important service you on one occasion rendered both ladies, in preserving them from a fate, to which death were almost preferable in any land, but which in this country is even yet more hateful in its results.—You may perhaps not have forgotten the circumstance I have alluded to?”

Harcourt recalled to mind the adventure at

Beejaghur, and the release of the ladies previous to the storm of the fortress. It was to their gratitude, then, that he owed so much—which had preserved him from the knife of the assassin, had induced them to risk their own lives to secure him an asylum in the only spot where safety could be found, and to whose exertions and watchful vigilance he was again indebted in all probability for his existence. He now remembered how often it had struck him that the voice of the elder lady was familiar to his ear, though in the confusion which prevailed during the only time he had seen her, he possessed but very little recollection of her features. And the sweet and gentle child that had clung to him on that eventful night,—she then was the beautiful being whose devoted and grateful feelings had rendered her regardless of all danger to herself, in her constant and unwearied watchfulness at his bedside. He turned uneasily on his couch, and for some moments maintained a deep and thoughtful silence, his mind perhaps reverting to the conversation he had heard between that parent and her child when he first awoke to consciousness.

Addressing himself at length to Dr. Lurgan, he again said, though in a voice which shook with emotion, “I presume it will be permitted me once

more to see these ladies, if only to express my profound sense of the very great obligations I am indebted to them."

"Most certainly," replied the physician, with a smile; "though a short time must elapse before I can sanction your meeting. In the first place, in regard to yourself, it is indispensably and absolutely necessary that everything likely to create the least agitation should be carefully avoided; in the next, I regret to say, the younger lady, now that the excitement has passed away, has been suffering under the influence of its reaction, which has brought on a low nervous attack; rendering it equally requisite that she herself should be kept profoundly quiet, to guard against her own health being seriously injured."

"You surely will not deceive me," said Harcourt, in an excited tone; "when I ask you if what she has endured on my account is likely to prove—"

"Of little moment," interrupted Dr. Lurgan, "provided the suggestions I have made are only acted up to: and I shall look to you," he continued, smiling, "as an example for their being enforced. I must confess, the episode I have witnessed in regard to this young girl, has given me an idea of the native character I had never

previously, with all my experience, entertained; the instance may be, and in all probability is, an isolated one; though Europeans are rarely, if ever, brought in contact with persons of the class to which these ladies belong: but the depth and strength of the grateful feeling manifested towards you by them, is what I must candidly declare I never could have imagined ever previously existed. But come—I must bring our conversation to a close, otherwise I shall be the first to infringe upon my own orders, which, remember, I look to you for being obeyed.”

He quitted the tent as he spoke, leaving Harcourt to his own reflections, which were of a nature that for a long time afterwards seemed to create in his mind considerable agitation. Subsequently this settled into deep and profound thought, and then terminated in calmness and tranquillity; the expression of his features being that of a person who had taken a final resolution upon a question, that had previously engendered anxiety, grief, uncertainty, and other feelings equally painful, which the imagination vainly strove either to repress or control; but which were at length subdued by the mental determination he had formed in regard to the line of conduct it was incumbent upon him to pursue.

In the course of a few days afterwards, as there was no return of the fever, and the health of Harcourt continued slowly yet progressively to improve, he received a visit from the elder lady, who had previously sent him notice of her intention. She was veiled, and came accompanied by several of her retainers, who remained without, spectators of the interview, at which Dr. Lurgan, at his own request, was present, lest it should prove too much for his patient. Though very weak, and obliged to be propped up by pillows, the Englishman was enabled to express gracefully and forcibly his deep and grateful sense of all the services she had rendered him, which no future devotion on his part ever could sufficiently repay. The lady at first was apparently cold and stately, at least as far as could be judged by her exterior; but whether it was the reminiscence of the daring enterprise which Harcourt had formerly risked for the preservation of herself and child, and the contrast then afforded by his bold and gallant bearing to his present emaciated form, which, according with the soft and musical, yet mournful and depressed accents which issued from his lips, awoke that latent feeling of pity, ever prevalent in a woman's heart, particularly in sympathy for the brave and noble—

certain it is, before long, the Blye drew closer to his couch, and pressing his hand between both of hers, she expressed her sincerest and earnest wishes for his complete and early restoration to health and strength.

This visit was several times repeated, and each time the lady's manner grew warmer and more cordial towards him; she now came alone, her veil was thrown aside, but still he saw not the younger one; and delicacy, not to mention the rigid propriety of Oriental etiquette, prohibited his making any inquiry regarding her, beyond sometimes asking the physician, when the opportunity presented itself of being alone with him, a few questions relative to her health; to which he received in reply, the assurance of her having wholly recovered from the trifling indisposition which had seized her.

One morning he was plunged into profound thought; the volume on which he had been endeavouring to fix his attention had dropped listlessly by his side, and for nearly an hour he remained lost in a continued fit of mental abstraction;—a rustling noise beside him was the first incident that roused him from his reverie, and within a few paces of his couch, stood the veiled form of the

young Peri, on whom his reflections were perhaps at that moment turned, and who remained standing as if timidity had rendered her uncertain whether to advance or retire; but as Harcourt, half endeavouring to rise, sunk back with the effort, she sprang towards him with the evident intention of preventing any further exertion.

As he took that small and delicate hand within his own, and she seated herself beside him, he could feel that she trembled violently. For some time both were silent; but at length the Englishman said in low, yet calm and distinct tones—  
 “Lady, to express to you the deep and grateful feelings which pervade me, in return for all the generous and unmerited kindness you have rendered, the risks and dangers you have incurred to preserve an almost thankless existence, would be wholly beyond my power. But with nothing in life to look forward to—destitute alike of all ties common to others—a being situated like myself, while cherishing every reminiscence that the most fervent gratitude and reverence could dictate, can only hope that no circumstance may again arise, which, in creating danger to his benefactress, may call for the sole means he would have it in his power to afford of manifesting his sense of all that he owes to her.”



"The obligation was on our part," she murmured, in soft and thrilling accents, "in expressing to the noble Dharcoor Sahib, that his generous devotion and matchless bravery, in defence of two persons wholly unknown to him, had not been forgotten!"

"In the slight service you allude to," replied Harcourt, "I merely discharged the common obligations of a man,--my duty as a soldier to the prince I served; but in the hazards incurred by yourself, lady, for one too--I will not revert to them, then, since it would appear to be a theme distressing to you; but can only hope you will receive the sincerest and most fervent wishes of my own heart for your future welfare and happiness; these, alas! being all that a stranger like myself has it in his power to offer."

"Happiness!" repeated the young girl, passionately; "that indeed is a feeling I can never look forward to in this life."

The blood rushed to the heart of Harcourt; for some moments he was violently agitated, and dark flush passed over his features, and then left them, if possible, still paler than before. He drew the youthful Bhye towards him, and gently raised the veil which concealed her features; she offered a faint resistance as he did so, though as the

covering was thrown aside, it revealed her countenance bathed in tears, and now crimsoned with the deepest blushes.

"Lady," said the Englishman, slowly and deliberately, and his words, in the solemn clearness of their tones, seemed to thrill through her entire frame; "fate has decreed that I should, unintentionally, become aware of the feelings of that noble, generous, and gentle nature, for one an alien to its blood, race, and religion;—nay, shrink not from this avowal, and turn not thus away;—hear me to an end, and then decide if, painful as the duty is before me, I am not compelled to discharge it as a man, as a soldier, and above all, in requital of what I owe to yourself. That young fresh heart has fixed its best affections upon one, who has nothing to offer in return—as in him those feelings, sapless, seared, and withered, have long since rested in the grave of one who—" his voice faltered, the words seemed to choke his utterance, he pressed his hand to his brow, but after a minute's silence continued—"whose love he gained during a period of past happiness, now gone for ever, and which never can be revived again; and whose image is engraved on his mind, in those characters which never for an instant can be banished from its reminiscence, till the sepulchre closes over him.

Lady, I have told you that you may be aware of who and what the being is you have thus honoured. I may add, that I am a wandering adventurer, without home or country, whose career in the path of glory and distinction was blighted on the same day that wrecked every prospect of earthly happiness. And now having fully explained everything, without the least mental reservation, in regard to myself, let me conclude by declaring, if after all you have heard, you deem the hand of one such as I have described is worthy your acceptance, and the forms of your religion admit of the possibility of such an union, let me proffer it to your service, with the assurance, that if I have no heart to accompany it, it shall at least prove the token of a life in future to be devoted to yourself alone, in exerting itself to the utmost for the security of your future prosperity and welfare."

He ceased speaking; but the words had scarce issued from his mouth, before the young girl threw herself upon her knees by the bedside, and seizing his hand, pressed it to her lips and forehead, as in a passionate burst of tears, she exclaimed, "Yours —yours until death! Drive me not from you! Oh! noble Dharcoor Sahib, my preserver, my benefactor, —your religion, your land shall be mine, only do not part from me, for without you life were indeed



a burden—too miserable to be borne. Be to me what you will, so that you do not leave me! and I—I will be your slave, or whatever you may command, so that I am only permitted to remain near you.”

Deeply affected by this outpouring of artless and spontaneous devotion, the Englishman raised her; and imprinting a kiss upon her smooth and polished brow, pressed her to his heart.

Three months afterwards, when Harcourt was in a great measure recovered, though still pale, and yet bearing traces of his recent severe illness, his marriage with the young Rajahpootné took place, the ceremony being performed by a celebrated French ecclesiastic, who was then making a tour of inquiry relative to the various Christian sects throughout the whole of India,\* and under whose auspices the

\* The Abbé du Bois.—The views of this eminent divine and traveller on the subject of caste, were in a great measure subsequently adopted by Bishops Middleton and Heber. In reference to its being a *civil*, instead of a religious distinction, and that among the higher classes of well-educated natives, it is understood and admitted to be so, in spite of the representations and exertions of the Brahminical priests, who naturally wish to inculcate the latter doctrine, with the intention of maintaining their own power and influence, which would be shaken to its foundation, were the former supposition to become general. The late celebrated Ram Mohun Roy asserted in his writings, that the religion of Brahma was a pure Theism, till gradually sapped and corrupted by the priesthood for their own

youthful Bhye was received into the pale of the Roman Catholic Church, of which Harcourt was a member; the rules of caste in other respects not being merely permitted, but even enjoined by the Missionary; a proceeding on his part in all probability derived from the record of such having been the usage of the mixed marriages that formerly

selfish interests and ambition; and it was in reference to works of a similar nature, by many profound thinking and philosophic Hindoos, (themselves Brahmins,) that induced the Abbé to declare, that the system of Caste, while the greatest drawback to the propagation of Christianity in India, was still compatible with its institutions, and might be made materially to assist in its advancement, if permitted to remain, being strictly understood as a civil institution solely; though he admits it would not long exist as such, when the principles of the Christian religion once became permanently established, and clearly and thoroughly understood by the mass of the population. It is relative to this subject, that he deems Missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant, have committed a great error in not recognising the principle, and in seeking to attach themselves rather to the lower, in preference to the upper and better informed classes; without whose conversion, he deems that of the great body of the people to be utterly hopeless. In regard to the latter, he has repeatedly expressed his conviction, that among the numerous converts he had made, he did not think there was one who altogether comprehended the doctrines of the religion he professed, or who would not have at once abandoned it if it entailed any degree of sacrifice, or created any injury in adhering to it. The question has given rise to a great deal of animated, and even angry discussion, not the most edifying in regard to Christian charity, although the belief seems very general, that the custom was admitted, if not sanctioned by the Apostles in reference to the earlier Jewish converts.

occurred between ladies of the Rajahpootné tribes, and the princes and nobles of the Mogul Empire, and which certainly afforded the highest degree of satisfaction to the elder Bhye; going far towards reconciling her to an event, her consent to which, given with deep and evident reluctance, had only been accorded from a sense of how deeply her child's happiness was concerned in the issue.

Tranquilly and serenely, if not happily, the existence of Harcourt glided onward. With whatever feelings and under whatever circumstances his union with the young Rajahpootné had taken place, it was impossible to regard such a simple, artless child of nature otherwise than with sentiments of esteem and affection. Her devotion and love to her husband appeared to know no bounds; she seemed never so happy as in his presence, and when occupied with his writing, drawing, or music, (for in these two last acquirements he excelled even many professed artists,) in which his time, in the absence of his usual active employment, was now constantly engaged: she would seat herself noiselessly and quietly for hours at his feet, in the earnest occupation of studying what she had requested Harcourt to set before her. She was by no means ill educated; and in addition to her own native tongue, not only wrote and spoke the

Persian, at this period the language of the Durbar throughout all the Courts of India, with considerable elegance and fluency, but was intimately acquainted with the writings of its most celebrated poets and historians. She had now urgently entreated her husband to act as her instructor in French, in the study of which she manifested a quickness, capacity, and intelligence, that at the expiration of a few months exhibited itself in the highest degree of proficiency.

Sometimes timidly and gently she would refer to the far distant lands of the west, though her large, dark, lustrous eyes would fill with tears, as she observed the saddened expression the theme would recal to Harcourt's features. He however rather encouraged the subject than repressed it, as after the first pang had passed away, it seemed in some degree more to lighten the load at his heart than otherwise, in referring to it. On these occasions Meet-ha would listen, in childish awe and wonder, to the narrative she heard of Frangistan, of the various kingdoms into which it was divided, its wealth, its innumerable and well-appointed armies, its feuds and jealousies—above all, to the history of that wonderful soldier of fortune, whose fierce struggles with his persevering, determined Island foe, were more or less known, although in

vague and indistinct forms, from one extremity of India to the other. And thus days, weeks, and months flew over them, a period of unalloyed, exquisite happiness to that young, fond, and devoted being, whose radiant countenance and confiding affection could not but impart somewhat of a similar feeling to the heart of her husband.



## CHAPTER IV.

THE Monsoon, or rainy season, had burst forth with more than usual violence, though at present there was a pause, it being one of those periods when the hot, moist, and oppressive state of the atmosphere intimated its approaching renewal with even yet greater fierceness than before. Thick, dense, black, and murky clouds had overspread the heavens, from which, at intervals, issued bright, gleaming, and forked flashes, accompanied by the low rumbling peals of distant thunder.

Within an hour afterwards, the lurid light had greatly increased, both in rapidity of action, and in its luminous glare, while the sounds of the thunder had deepened into a more constant and prolonged echo. Again there was a pause, and the air felt thick, and almost stifling, in its hot, moist, oppressive sultriness and stillness. At once the whole vault of heaven seemed illumined by one dazzling, fearful, terrific sheet of flame, the herald

of a roar, which appeared like the simultaneous discharge of a hundred pieces of heavy artillery : and then the clouds apparently burst asunder, pouring down upon the earth such a seething torrent of rain, as could almost have led the terrified spectator to regard it as the harbinger of a second deluge. It streamed upon the fields and gardens bordering upon the Ganges, the greater part of which became transformed into one vast, continued flood, under whose influence the growth of the foliage and verdure seemed almost visible to the eye,\* while the river itself became one continued foaming torrent, into which its banks fell with an explosion, the force of which rivalled that of the thunder itself.†

From a large and handsome dwelling, the interior of which was fitted up with luxury and splendour, there issued the sounds of woe and wailing. In one apartment was an elderly female figure, whose alternate sobs, and low, heavy moaning, indicated that grief which refused to be

\* Such is the luxuriant vegetation of the tropics, that in the rainy season, the grass would almost seem to grow under the view of the spectator.—D' HERBELOT.

† The masses of earth falling from the sides of the Ganges into the river during the monsoon, have been known, after a series of years, to create the necessity of a new survey being made, for the adjustment of territorial claims in reference to value, the revenue, &c., &c.

comforted, while her surrounding attendants beat their breasts with all the frenzied gestures of oriental despair. In a second, was the kind and benevolent English physician, Dr. Lurgan, who, summoned from a distance of nearly a hundred and fifty miles, had flown upon the wings of humanity and friendship; but, alas! without the power to save. His countenance was pale and mournful, and as he strode hastily up and down the room, he muttered, "So young, so good, so beautiful, and yet so suddenly taken from life!—transient indeed has been her passage through its joys and cares, though are we not taught to believe that they who die early are the most blessed?"

Within a third chamber, upon a bed of death, lay stretched the form of that youthful and lovely being who, eighteen months previous, had bestowed her heart's best affections upon him who now sat by her bedside—one hand clasped in both of hers, the other shading his vision, as if he would shut out from his view that last fond look of fervent, devoted love, with which the dying girl regarded him. On a couch, at the further extremity of the apartment, and covered with a linen sheet, lay what a glance sufficed to indicate as the body of a new-born infant. Alas! the mandate had gone forth—that inscrutable decree, before

which all must bow, that she, that young, bright, and beautiful being, must also die ; and ere the morrow's eve had closed in the darkness of night, she would be consigned to the same silent grave that contained the remains of her child.

He sat by that bedside in tearless, silent agony, as if grief denied him the utterance of those words he fain would speak. But they came not ; and the first sound that broke the stillness which prevailed, was the faint, though clear and distinct voice of the dying sufferer, as she murmured, " Mourn not for me, oh ! my Dharcoor Sahib : deeply afflicting as it is to leave you thus, I have at least this consolation, that never did you love me as you do now."

A deep groan of unutterable anguish escaped the unfortunate Harcourt, as these words reaching him, he turned a glance of mute, despairing grief, upon the now fast sinking form beside him. " Had our boy lived," she continued, " oh ! with what pleasure should I have watched his progress ; following in the footsteps of his loved and gallant father, he would have been a Surdar like himself, a soldier studying to emulate his nobility of fame and glory ; but now, husband and child are lost to me for ever—yet no, not for ever, my Dharcoor Sahib !" she resumed with sudden energy, " our

stay upon earth, as the good Padre assured me, was only the prelude to our future eternal reunion in a brighter and happier land. See, my lord, my life, the memento I have preserved of that good spirit who, I have the conviction, now watches over us, and will prove my guiding star to a more glorious hemisphere."

As she spoke, she drew from under her pillow a highly-finished miniature, which, unknown to Harcourt, she must in secret have had copied from the original by some able European artist. The dying girl half smiled, as she observed the glance he directed towards it, but grew alarmed as she remarked the wild and maddened expression which succeeded.

"My Dharcoor Sahib," she continued, and her plaintive accents, sounding like low, sweet music upon his ear, recalled the Englishman to himself; "*She* must indeed have been worthy of your choice, and of that love so wholly and exclusively given to her. You married the poor ignorant Rajahpootné girl from a feeling of compassion—the compassion of a noble and generous nature—and yet with what tenderness and affection you shielded, regarded, and protected her! How the darkness increases around me! can it be owing to the raging of the storm without—my lord!—my love!"—

The voice ceased; some further murmured but unintelligible sounds issued from her lips—an effort was made to clasp the hand she held to her heart—that grasp grew fixed, cold, and rigid; a seraph smile seemed to illumine her features—she lay still, calm, and motionless; and without a struggle, without a sigh, her spirit passed away!

And there, by the bedside, remained the bereaved husband, as if in silent communion with the dead, his hand still locked in that of the corpse, which he never attempted to withdraw. He spoke not, moved not, stirred not; and a spectator, upon entering that chamber of death, might almost have been led to believe that Fate had stricken both at the same instant.

In this state Harcourt was found by the physician, whose entry at this period was in all probability the means of preserving his life, by the profuse bleeding it was requisite to have recourse to more than once during the night, though for weeks afterwards he lay in all the delirium of a brain fever.

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Upon a gentle eminence, overhanging the banks of the Ganges, in the neighbourhood of a now

deserted but once flourishing factory and settlement, there is a tomb, at present overgrown with low jungle and high thick grass. The monument is of plain, solid masonry, and upon a white marble tablet in the centre, now scarcely legible, is simply engraved the following inscription :—

M. H. AGED 16 YEARS.

Some twelve years since, it attracted the attention of a passing traveller, proceeding down the river, one of those inquiring minds by whom nothing is overlooked, when likely to prove of interest in investigating causes and circumstances productive of information of an unusual nature. His persevering and diligent inquiries led to his acquiring a detail of the incidents which have now been embodied in the present narrative ; few persons, if any, being aware that the French officer, who acquired so much reputation during the short period he remained in the service of the Maharajah Jeswunt Row Holkar, was in reality an Englishman, the once great favourite of Napoleon, whose distinguished fame at one time bade fair to rise to the highest pitch of military glory, and rival those great names, whose celebrity and renown subsequently became extended from the Borodino to the Ebro.

For many months after the tomb had first risen, a tall, dark figure might be observed in the depth of the night ever near it, being often wont to remain there till daylight was about gleaming over the horizon. The superstition of the people in the neighbourhood declared it held communion with the invisible spirits of the air, and carefully avoided venturing near the spot for long afterwards, when the supposed phantom had suddenly disappeared, and was seen no more.

## L'ENVOI.

Towards the close of the year 1812, in one of the wildest spots of the south-west part of Ireland, a gentleman (supposed to be a foreigner) had taken up his residence, whose mode of life and appearance excited among the turbulent, half lawless people among whom his abode was chosen, the highest degree of curiosity, not unmingled with a salutary feeling of awe and fear. From being always dressed in deep mourning, it was at first imagined he was an ecclesiastic, though this supposition was very soon laid aside. His hair was white, and his tall, and evidently once athletic figure bent; though it was easy to perceive from his careworn, sorrow-stricken features, on which grief had ploughed the deepest furrows, that this



was not the effect of time, but that he was one whom the extreme of misery, and the acutest mental suffering of the intensest and most agonizing nature, had bowed to the dust.

Previous to his arrival, an old, but moderate sized mansion, belonging to an ancient and decayed family, was taken by an agent who came down from Dublin, which having been completely and carefully repaired, was fitted up with plain but handsome furniture that arrived in vans, and was soon followed by the master and his household, which consisted of an elderly housekeeper and two other female domestics of advanced years, and a tall, powerful, burly looking man, a Scotchman, whose look and bearing would at once have proclaimed the discharged soldier, had even the circumstance of a slight lameness, (the result of a severe wound in the hip, which however scarcely interfered with the activity of his movements,) been wanting as a corroboration of the suspicion.

On their first arrival every effort was made to obtain through the servants some information in regard to their master, but without success: the females, who were English, were cold and reserved, and either were, or affected to be, entirely ignorant of everything regarding him up to the period of their engagement, which was only a few weeks

previous, while the keen grey eyes of the Celt seemed to express a malicious pleasure in alternately raising and baffling the curiosity of his auditory, as they sought for similar intelligence from himself.

In one instance the presence of the stranger was quickly found to be productive of considerable benefit to the surrounding peasantry. If not wealthy, his circumstances appeared to be by no means limited, and numbers of the poor found occupation in laying out and working in the grounds and plantations surrounding the house ; while to the sick, the infirm, and the unfortunate, his purse was ever open to an extent that caused him to be regarded with reverence and respect ; and when in his solitary rambles in the neighbourhood, made generally in the evening, he encountered any of the labouring population, every hat was raised, while low and deep, yet fervent blessings, from men, women, and children alike, were invoked upon his head. Nor was it in this instance alone that the stranger's influence was felt and acknowledged ; as in the faction fights, which sometimes took place, his voice, raised to a pitch of stern command that instilled alike both fear and attention, was ever sufficient to still the tumult, even when it raged the fiercest.

Of the resident gentry of the country there were very few whose seats were immediately near; and as any advances made to the recluse were invariably courteously but firmly declined, he soon became left wholly alone in his solitude, the only enlivenment to which appeared in the exquisite music which, emanating from a master hand, was constantly heard, particularly at night, proceeding from his dwelling.

But the neighbourhood came to be seriously disturbed, and murder and agrarian outrage, the sequel of the unhappy risings of 1798 and 1801, which up to this period had not been altogether repressed, became at length so open and daring, as to stalk abroad in the open day; rendering it imperatively necessary on the part of the Government to have recourse to the most energetic measures for its suppression, the entire province being consequently proclaimed and placed under martial law. During the prevalence of these scenes of anarchy and violence, the stranger had not only never received the slightest molestation, but when even a supposition was raised, in regard to the existence of such an intention, a sturdy band voluntarily came forward on the instant, and under the direction of old Archy, the veteran Scottish soldier, kept watch and ward around the premises, with the emphatically expressed determination of giving a good

account of whoever should dare to venture near with any hostile purpose.

But the retired mode of life of the stranger, his supposed foreign extraction, and the inflexible resolution with which he shunned all approach to intercourse or society with any one, and it is not improbable his very popularity in the neighbourhood, led to himself in some measure falling under suspicion; and accordingly, one day, Mr. Edwards, the name by which the recluse was known, was waited upon by the stipendiary magistrate of the district, who requested him to communicate with the General commanding the troops, Sir Richard Osborne, to whose authority the civil power was now subordinate, and who had recently established his head quarters about five miles distant. The stranger started, and for the moment seemed much agitated as the name of the Commander was mentioned, an incident which did not escape the vigilant functionary's attention: whatever interpretation, however, he may have applied to it of a sinister nature, received but little corroboration from the bearing of the recluse, who courteously, though coldly, if not haughtily, immediately acquiesced in the measure he suggested.

Within an hour afterwards his servant was despatched in a car, with a sealed packet to the

General, into whose hands alone he was instructed to deliver it. Archy executed his commission with the promptitude and precision of an old soldier, and found the Commander engaged with the magistrate already referred to, from whom he was in all probability receiving a report relative to his morning's visit to the stranger. On breaking the seal, and perusing the letter, the General seemed deeply and strangely moved, as he half inaudibly uttered, "Good God! can this be possible?" Rising from his seat, he for some time paced up and down the room, to the evident surprise of his confederate, and then suddenly turning to the Scotsman, and ascertaining from him how he had come, requested him to drive back to his master at once, as he wished to accompany him.

Apologising to his astonished companion, and desiring that his horse might be sent after him, the General hastily quitted the apartment, and mounting the car with Archy, they proceeded with all speed to the recluse's dwelling.

The interview between the two was long and protracted, but what passed never afterwards transpired. On its termination Sir Richard quitted the house in a serious and thoughtful mood, but the following day returned, accompanied by Lady Osborne. This lady, a Spaniard by birth, though

no longer young, still retained a degree of beauty at once dazzling and striking, which, joined to accomplishments of the highest nature, and manners of the most fascinating and agreeable description, had rendered her a universal favourite in the circles of English society, and an object of still greater and more fervent regard to those brought into more immediate relationship and intimacy with her.

This second visit to the stranger was even more lengthened than the first; and on its conclusion, as the General and his lady took their departure, and the latter let down her veil, apparently to screen her countenance from observation, the traces of recent tears were visible upon her features, the evident result of long and continued weeping.

From this time, though the recluse himself never deviated from the resolution he had formed on his first arrival in the neighbourhood, he was constantly, almost daily, visited by Sir Richard and Lady Osborne; the presence of the former being still deemed requisite in the country, though the large force of the military quartered there had quickly put a stop to every outrage, and established order and tranquillity throughout the whole province.

Lady Osborne was a perfect musician; and she would sometimes sit for hours in the calm

summer evenings, singing the beautiful ballads of her own sunny land—of the glories of the gallant Abencerrages, the might and power of the fierce Zegris, and the nobility of the Castilian chivalry, —the effect of which upon the stranger was that usually produced by those souvenirs of the past, in which it is difficult to say whether pleasure or melancholy most predominates, as motionless, breathless, he would listen to the strains that fell upon his ear; deep and smothered sighs alone proclaiming the intense and fervent interest with which they inspired him.

As the autumn advanced, the recluse's health began visibly and rapidly to decline, though he refused to see any medical attendant, stating that he well knew the nature of the disorder which affected him, and the only remedy which could in any way alleviate it. Swiftly, though gradually, his disease gained upon him; and at length he was confined to his apartment, and obliged to recline altogether upon a couch, attended more constantly than ever by his attached friends, whose presence invariably seemed to soothe and console the intense suffering he appeared at intervals to experience.

One morning, when the keen east wind sighed heavily among the trees, scattering in showers the blighted and withered leaves now fast falling from

their branches, the servant proceeded at the usual hour to the stranger's apartment. He tapped at the door, but receiving no answer, opened it, and entered, and much to his surprise found that the recluse was already dressed, and seated in a fauteuil. Alarmed, though he scarcely knew why, yet with a vague presentiment of evil, the old soldier hurriedly approached his master;—he called to him, but received no answer; he touched him on the shoulder, but he moved not, and then he glanced upon his countenance, one look at which sent a cold chill to the veteran's heart. The eyes were closed as if in sleep; a calm placid expression pervaded the features, upon which a smile still lingered; and the hand had closed over a miniature case in its nerveless grasp, the fingers being cold, stiff, and rigid. He was dead! and apparently must have been so for many hours, as it was evident the bed had not been lain in throughout the night; and the probability is, his soul had passed from its earthly tenement, the very moment he was preparing for repose.

As the soldier glanced in momentary stupor round the apartment, his eye fell upon a paper on the writing table near, gazing upon which, he found it was a memorandum dated a few days previous, which fully expressed that the stranger was



well aware of, and fully prepared for the fate he knew must sooner or later befall him. It simply bore the inscription—"My will is in the left-hand drawer of the bureau,—should any sudden accident occur, let Sir Richard Osborne be sent for on the instant."

This document recalled the veteran to a sense of the duty that lay before him. He hastily summoned the females of the household, who were horror-struck at finding their kind and indulgent master a lifeless corpse; and then set out with all speed to report what had occurred to the General.

Both Sir Richard and Lady Osborne were quickly upon the spot, and on entering the chamber of death, the latter, throwing herself in a chair beside the dead, and clasping that now senseless hand within her own, exclaimed in a voice of deep and passionate grief—"Oh, Heaven! for his life to have ended thus!"

The General gazed fixedly and sorrowfully for several minutes upon the body, and then said in low, broken accents, "Farewell, brave and gallant heart! may Providence grant you in a better world that happiness denied to you in this." He took the hand of his lady as he spoke; she still continuing to weep bitterly, and gently but forcibly removed her from the sad spectacle presented to her view.

A Coroner's Inquest was held, but a medical

investigation quickly revealed the cause of the stranger's decease, and a verdict was returned of —“ Died from disease of the heart.” The only additional evidence that was called for, was that of the servant, and Major General Sir Richard Osborne. The deposition of the former merely related to the first discovery of his master's death, and that of the latter to a corroboration of his testimony, with the addition, that he was intimately known to the deceased in early life, but as any reference to this period was wholly unconnected with the subject under investigation, and could be productive of no good whatever, he must decline entering upon anything concerning it.

The body was consigned to the grave in the Catholic cemetery, and was followed to its last home by the whole of the neighbourhood, amidst the tears and lamentations of all assembled. A very beautiful sarcophagus of white marble shortly afterwards rose over it; but simply bearing this inscription :

E. H. OBIT OCTOBER 1813;

a memento which seemed to intimate that the recluse had once borne a different name from that by which he was distinguished at the period of his death.

The day after the funeral the will of the deceased was opened in presence of the authorities, no claim of kindred whatever being asserted by any one; when it was ascertained that Sir Richard Osborne had been named sole executor, a sealed letter also in the hand-writing of the stranger being found addressed to him. By this, the furniture of the house, and the entire property it contained, were directed to be sold, and the proceeds, united to a further considerable sum of money, distributed in specified proportions among the poor of the neighbourhood and his domestics, the latter of whom were especially commended to the General's care and protection: the only exception to this, was in regard to the paintings and several portfolios of beautiful and highly-finished drawings, the whole of which were bequeathed to Sir Richard himself; and some very fine, and apparently valuable jewels of foreign setting and workmanship, that were left to Lady Osborne. No record was left of any other funds possessed by the deceased, though it was supposed a large packet, addressed to a gentleman of the medical profession in India, Dr. Lurgan, and forwarded to him by the General, had reference to considerable property belonging to him in that country.

Shortly after tranquillity had been restored in the

disturbed districts, and the authority had been returned into the hands of the civil power, Sir Richard Osborne returned to England. In his ancestral mansion, situated in one of our northern counties, there was a room which, appropriated exclusively to Lady Osborne, appeared to possess a singular attraction for travellers and visitors. It was hung with paintings, both oil and water-colour, from the ceiling to the floor, the whole being as remarkable for the beauty of colouring and execution, which distinguished them, as the variety of subjects which they embodied; consisting, as they did, of portraits, landscapes, figures and buildings, derived from various climes and countries, the rich scenes of Italy and Southern Europe being intermingled with representations of the picturesque costumes, high mountains, and trackless forests of the East.

Among them were several large highly finished aqua-relles, descriptive of apparently foreign military service, the most striking among which was what seemed to be the portrait of an officer of high rank, clad in a cuirassier uniform, before which both Sir Richard and Lady Osborne would often stand and gaze till the eyes of the latter filled with tears, as she murmured, "How like,—oh! how

like." There were, however, two others, which no one ever passed without expressing an equal degree of interest and admiration. They were hung on each side of the picture of the General Officer alluded to; the first representing a young girl of exquisite loveliness, apparently an Italian, or Spaniard—the expression of whose features seemed emblematic of melancholy sweetness, as with one hand supporting the finely formed head, she leaned over the balcony of a gorgeous, palatial mansion, filled with the choicest and most brilliant flowers of the south;—the second was also that of a youthful female, scarcely indeed emerged from the age of girlhood, of Eastern, and it would seem from the costume, of Indian origin. She was also of surpassing beauty, though in a wholly different style: the richly carved, half-opened coral lips, being expanded into a smile, expressive of a buoyant spirit, while the large, dark, lustrous, oriental eyes were fixed as if in playful, yet rooted and all absorbed attention, upon some loved object before her.

Many and various were the conjectures and observations these pictures excited; not the less so, perhaps, that the curiosity awakened upon the subject, was heightened by the reserve it could not

fail to be remarked was observed regarding them, by the General and his lady; whose manner, courteous and urbane as it invariably was, nevertheless intimated that any questions or allusions to the paintings referred to, were not only highly distasteful, but when too openly pressed or adverted to, became extremely painful.

THE END.

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R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

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